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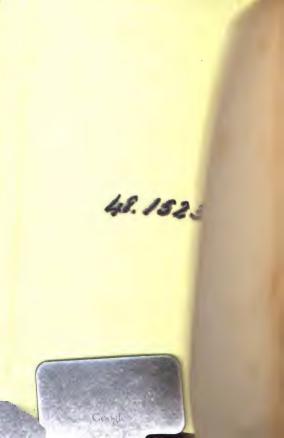
















SISTER TERESA MARGARET REDI. OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

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Bodleun Library

Sister Teresa Margaret Redi.

OF THE HEART OF JESUS,

A BAREFOOTED CARMELITE NUN,

WHOSE BODY IS PRESERVED INCORRUPT IN THE CONVENT OF 8. TERESA, FLORENCE;

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY L. T. H.;
AND CAREFULLY REVISED BY

THE VERY REV. J. DONOVAN, D.D.



"Efficacius Modernorum cohortant exemple quam verum; et magnæ confusionis pudor est, si, cum sanctis viris in una simul ætate viventes, in rectæ conversationis studio eis in aliquo non reperiamur æquales."

8. Petrus Damas.

London :

THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON, 172, FLEET ST.; 9, CAPEL ST., DUBLIN; AND DERBY. 1848.

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Bedication.

DEAR LADY HARTWELL,

Your Ladyship is aware of the circumstances under which this little volume was confided to me for publication. You well know the piety that undertook, the talent that executed, and the humility that would disclaim, this valuable little production. Your maternal care reared the tender scion, which, transplanted into the favoured and secluded garden of the Spouse, has produced this—its delicious first-fruit—in due season. To your Ladyship, therefore, is preeminently due this little offering of early piety and talent.

Most willingly would I have prefixed to this golden volume the name of the Translator: her name would grace its title-page, and impart to the work no ordinary charm; but, whilst I may seem to regret, I certainly cannot but ad-

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mire and applaud, the spirit of religious self-devotion that deprives me of that desired pleasure. and this volume of that additional attraction. It is not, however, to be forgotten, that to your Ladyship we are at least remotely indebted for this accession to our sacred literature. Your plastic hand first formed to virtue her soft and susceptible nature: your precept and example first developed the germs of her opening thought, and cherished into maturity her riper judgment; and your enlightened liberality first seconded the impulse of grace that urged on her earnest inquiries into the principles of the Catholic religion. In fine, like her, you too applied your clear and vigorous judgment to the investigation of truth; and, having once descried at a distance "the city seated on a mount," you, like her, hastened to enter within its spacious and secure portals, having burst the bonds of early prejudice, cast off the fetters of early associations, and what, if not more difficult, is certainly more painful, having severed some of the fondest ties that link us to society, and, I had almost said, to ourselves. Your Ladyship has done more. To complete the sacrifice, you with her have abandoned for ever the world and its allurements-rank, fortune, fashion, country, hometo consecrate yourselves to God in cloistered

austerity, forgetting and forgotten by the world! Thrice happy consummation, — honourable to yourselves, instructive to others, edifying to all, and glorious to religion!

To have accompanied your Ladyship from Rome to your present blessed retreat at Ronciglione-to have had the honour and happiness of seeing your Ladyship aggregated to the holy Community, of which an only and favoured child, a cherished and fond daughter, already formed and still forms one-to have witnessed the thrilling, though subdued, emotion of that first interview, the tender and devotional interchange of mutual congratulation: the first cordial embraces of pure, reciprocal, exalted love:-in a word, to have beheld mother and daughter. both nurtured in early prejudice, and too long separated by difference of pursuit, now happily united in religious sisterhood within the same sacred enclosure, to pour forth in fervid accents their mingled orisons of praise and thanksgiving to the Lamb,-this, in a distant land, was to me no ordinary privilege, no vulgar enjoyment. Never shall that tender, and instructive, and edifying scene be blotted from my memory. It was on that very occasion, and at the grate of that very cloister, that the manuscript of this little volume was handed to me for publication

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by your Ladyship and Sister Gonzaga; and may I not, again, say with great truth, that to your Ladyship is due this offering of filial piety?

In omitting the Translator's name in the title-page. I have strictly adhered to the letter of my instructions: in having thus alluded to it, even by implication, I have deliberately departed from their spirit; and the entire responsibility of having done so, I most willingly assume. The reader. I have no doubt, will deem the injunction to secrecy more honoured in the breach than in the observance: nor do I altogether despair of obtaining your Ladyship's kind indulgence. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven," is the command of inspiration; and had I grudgingly concealed under a bushel the light of so splendid an example, might I not seem, in some sort, to have lost sight of the Saviour's injunction? How many are there to whom that bright example may prove as a lamp to guide their feet in the ways of peace—an incentive to emulate better gifts, and "glorify their Father who is in heaven?" Would it even be generous on my part to withhold this pious consolation from the long-afflicted and still suffering Catholics of the British Empire? But should your Ladyship still feel disposed to mur-

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mur dissent, allow me respectfully to remind you of the two men mentioned in the Gospel, whom "Jesus strictly charged, saying: See that no man know it;" and who, notwithstanding, "going out, spread his fame abroad in all the country;" and also of him who, though "strictly charged" by our Lord to "tell no man," "being gone out, began to publish and blazon forth the matter, so that the fame of the Redeemer went abroad the more."

The volume itself I leave to its own intrinsic worth as its best recommendation: a more interesting or instructive piece of sacred biography it were difficult to find compressed within so narrow a compass; and for the judicious selection we are indebted to the taste and judgment of the Translator. With regard to the translation itself, I fearlessly give it to the public with all its merits and demerits, such as they are; and I feel convinced, that to secure it a kind, nay, a flattering reception, it is quite unnecessary to add, that it is the production of a young lady,— a convert to the Catholic faith, and a barefooted Carmelite nun, who had yet scarcely completed her twentieth year.

I have prefixed a compendium of the "Account of the conversion of L. T. H. to the holy Catholic Church, written by herself;" which, as



your Ladyship is aware, is already in the hands of the public, and of which a summary cannot fail to prove acceptable as an appropriate accompaniment to the translation.

In conclusion, may I pray your Ladyship to accept the dedication of this little volume as a debt of justice due to you on so many accounts, as a tribute of respect for your Ladyship's exalted virtues, and as a proof of the sincerity with which I have the honour to remain,

Your Ladyship's
Obedient, humble Servant, and Friend
in Christ,
JEREMIAH DONOVAN.

Rome, Convent of the Holy Apostles. May, 1839.



AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

CONVERSION OF L. T. H. TO THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, &c.

My predilection for the Catholic religion was one of the first impulses of my infant heart; my conviction of its truth, one of the first efforts of my maturer reason. Born of English Protestant parents, and brought up in the bosom of my own family. I had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the principles of Catholics, and no extrinsic facilities to make the enquiry. in common with all Church of England Protestants, I had been taught the Apostles' Creed: and the words, "I believe the holy Catholic Church," were alone sufficient to awaken strong doubts in my young mind. In the simplicity and candour of youth. I therefore asked, "Why, if I believe the holy Catholic Church, am I not a Catholic? Why do we call ourselves Protestants. not Catholics!"-" We are Catholics, child," was the ready reply; "but not Roman Catholics."-"No!" I said; "impossible! We cannot be Pro-Digitized by Google

testants and Catholics at the same time. They are contradictory terms. We cannot believe a church, and at the same time protest against her doctrines. Besides, we are never called Catholics. Applied to us, the term Catholic becomes unintelligible. Our clergy are not the Catholic clergy; our churches are not the Catholic churches;-how, then, can we be Catholics? and if not Catholics, how say with truth that we believe the Catholic Church!" No attempt at explanation could make me comprehend the words of the Apostles' Creed, as a Protestant; but I was told that I was too young to understand the matter, and that I must say the Creed, as every one else did. With this I was far from satisfied, even at that early age. The difficulty still remained in my mind, and I was at a loss how to overcome it. Brought up, as I was, in a love of truth and a detestation of falsehood. I said to myself: " If then I continue to say the Creed. I must believe the Catholic Church; but where is the Church which I thus profess to believe! One thing is certain, that it cannot be the Protestant Church;" and from that moment, I may say, I ceased to be a Protestant. I believed the Catholic Church, although I had yet to ascertain where it was to be found. Henceforward, the very name of Catholic delighted me; and whenever I heard that any one was a Catholic, or a Catholic chapel or convent was pointed out to me, I thought I found in this very circumstance a proof of the unanimous consent of all that we were not the Catholics, and that I must look for

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the Catholic Church amongst those whom all acknowledged to be Catholics.

A little circumstance occurred in my childhood, which I shall here venture to relate, as it appears to me to form a link in that chain of graces which, I trust, has conducted me into the sanctuary of religion. I had not been more than four years old when I visited a convent of Teresian Nuns, then residing at Great Canford in Dorsetshire, now at Valognes in France; and though all other events relating to my childhood have passed away like a dream, that visit remains firmly fixed in my memory. The visit, in itself apparently unimportant, I mention, as in it and the impressions which it produced on my tender mind, I recognize the first intimations of my ultimate vocation,—the first accents of the Divine Spouse inviting me to His holy love. What we commonly call chance, is the wise dispensation of Providence, of that God who counts the hairs of our heads, and without whose permission a sparrow falls not from the house-top, who "ordereth all things sweetly."

For some years, however, I continued in a state of painful suspense and embarrassment; and an accidental visit to Ireland, where Catholics are so much more numerous, served to increase my anxiety and stimulate my curiosity. I was then only ten years old; but I did not lose sight of my favourite pursuit. At Killarney I gained my wish of entering a Catholic chapel, and I recollect the breathless silence with which I looked round its interior; but an evening service was

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about to commence, and I was reluctantly hurried away. At Kilkenny, on our way from Cork to Dublin, I saw the interior of a convent, and well do I recollect every part of it,—its garden, its little chapel, the abbess, some nuns who were teaching in a large school for poor girls. All this I remember well. The scene could not fail to impress me with a high opinion of the sanctity of their calling; and I left the spot with mingled emotions of pleasure and regret.

After our return to England, we had a house in the country, about twenty miles from London, but we frequently drove up to town. On the road, at Hammersmith, is a convent which we had to pass, and which served to refresh my previous recollections. Indeed, I never passed it by without viewing it with a sort of envious delight. When I was about fourteen, we left the country, and moved almost entirely to London. I think it was about this time that I found the 'Ave Maria' in Italian. I committed it to memory. and said it much oftener than any other prayer. Perhaps that act of my innocence was of service to me. That vessel of election, "Mary, full of grace, blessed among women," the Mother of my God, may have interceded for the poor child. who, in her simplicity and want of all instruction, saluted her in the words once addressed to her by an angel, when announcing to her the glories of her divine maternity, and the glad tidings of approaching redemption.

Still, however, my ideas of religion were, of course, vague and undefined. Of one thing, it is

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true, I was satisfied, that the *Protestant* Church was not the *Catholic* Church; and it was, therefore, a positive pain to me to go to Sunday service. Moreover, in a Protestant place of worship I found nothing to fix my attention, nothing to excite my devotion: all was cold, dull, heavy, and monotonous; and I generally left it wearied in mind and body.

I thus grew up until I was eighteen, with an utter dislike to the sect of which I was obliged to profess myself a member, not, however, without frequent compunctious visitings. My cast of thought, owing perhaps to my education, was not like that of most young females. My father had no other daughter that outlived infancy; but he had three sons, all three now dead, and I was educated pretty much in the same manner as they, because he had a great horror of a silly girl. This circumstance may possibly have rendered me somewhat more reflecting, and even masculine, in my ideas, and therefore less disposed to pursue with blind impetuosity the delusive phantom of worldly dissipation. In the crowded and brilliant drawing-room, it is true, I danced and talked and laughed as gaily as others: but my heart was far from being at peace. More than once has it happened to me to look on myself with a sort of contemptuous disgust, when, returned from the heated ball-room in broad daylight, the time that I now rise to my devotions or am hearing mass, my hair uncurled, my flowers faded, my dress soiled, my frame exhausted, my head and feet aching, the sun

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shining in at my window as if in mockery of me, I threw myself back on a chair to be unadorned, and more than once did I exclaim to the astonishment of my weary maid: "Good God! can this be the purpose for which I have been placed in this world! How have I passed the night! What have I done! what have I heard! Flattery, folly, vanity, dissipation, misery, deceit!" Thus in the midst of pleasure I was never harpy, never contented. I sighed for something I had not yet found: that something was my God!

There were times when I felt as if I must find some egress for the waters of bitterness that overflowed in my bosom, some one to speak to on the subject of religion; but how was it to be accomplished! I had also read some books relating to conversions to Catholicity; one of a minister of the Established Church, which had come to the house with some novels and other works. If any one talked of having been at the Bavarian Chapel on Sunday, I longed to go there; but my parents, far from facilitating, were altogether opposed to all my religious inquiries. In May, 1831, however, I succeeded in obtaining leave to go for curiosity to the Spanish Chapel in Manchester Square to the High Mass. I shall never forget the circumstance. What a contrast! There was I, the fine lady, that could not trouble myself to kneel or even move in the grand pew to which I was generally obliged to transfer my unwilling body, and who could scarcely be civil if they asked to put any one into the seat with us; and no sooner do I find myself at the soul-

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stirring service of the Catholic Church, than, overcome as it were by the majesty of the place and the sublimity of its worship, I fall down spontaneously on my bended knees in profound adoration, and exclaim with the apostle, on Thabor: "Lord, it is good to be here." I knelt during the whole time of the long High Mass on a hard board in a common seat, and drank in most eagerly every word of the sermon. Thus, whilst my reason was instructed by the pure doctrines which I heard announced, I found, even in the sensible effect produced, an additional proof of the superior wisdom of the Catholic Church, enlisting the senses on the side of religion, and consecrating the whole being, soul and body, to the pure worship of God. I repeat it, never shall I forget the impression produced on my mind on the occasion: but whilst it served to estrange my affections from the world, and fix them on my God, it also increased my anxiety and fixed my determination, as soon as possible, to make myself thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the Catholic religion.

On the 28th of June, 1831, my poor father died. As long as he lived I could scarcely have summoned courage to reveal the full extent of my religious scruples; his prejudices were extreme, and, in fact, he so often said in my hearing that the Catholic religion was all mummery and absurdity, that I dared not open my lips in such direct contradiction to him; nor could I, his darling, now his only child in his old age, (he had lost five) bring myself to add to his

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sorrows or forfeit his affection. His lamented death, I mention it with pain, did not tend to remove my strong suspicions of the fallacy of Protestantism. Although a decided supporter of the Church as by law established, and although his favourite son had been by his wish a clergyman of that Church, yet, in his last illness, my poor father would listen to no one that recommended him to see a clergyman, alleging, as I heard him say, that the parson could do nothing for him, that he himself knew as much as any parson. How different the sentiments of a dying Catholic! "Is any one sick among you," says St. James, "let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord will raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him. Confess, therefore, your sins," &c. Such is the practice of the Catholic Church. The priest is brought in: the sick man confesses his sins: the priest prays over him. anointing him with oil; and St. James assures us that the sins of the sick man shall be forgiven. and that he shall be saved. My poor dear father thought differently, and I have been since credibly informed that amongst dying Protestants his was by no means an isolated case.

I did not see my lamented father for a week before his death, having been confined to my bed by serious illness. During that time, and in the subsequent silence, solitude, and sadness of a house of mourning, I had more time for reflection. About two months after, we went into Germany to my mother's brother and his family. I was then in a Catholic country; and I had a better opportunity of observing the external practices, &c. of the Catholic religion. Often did I linger 'mid the cemeteries, admiring the little crosses, emblems of our hope of a happy resurrection, that marked the Catholic's grave; and not unfrequently too did I cast a longing look at the confessionals, as if I should like to pour out my anxieties, my conflicts, my sorrows, my sins, to the minister of religion, who could understand and heal them. I, however, still continued externally a protestant.

On the 21st of September, just before I quitted Germany, I met with a severe accident, for which, although it rendered me a suffering and helpless invalid for four long years, I can never sufficiently thank God. It was, I have no doubt, the effect of his mercy. In Paris, where my illness daily increased, I chanced to hear the eminent surgeon Dupuytrien say, that he thought I could not live many months, but that, should I ever recover, I should certainly be deformed. This announcement naturally alarmed me: for the loss of personal beauty I felt no concern; but I might soon die! This, indeed, alarmed me. "Were I to die now," I reflected, "what would become of me? I believe the Catholic Church, and that out of the Catholic Church there is no salvation, for so I have been taught, as a protestant, in my Athanasian creed; where then is the Catholic Church that I may die a Catholic? It

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matters little to me what the world may say of me. No one will really grieve for my death but my mother; and she will be better when I am dead; but I must die a Catholic."

Accordingly I procured some books that treated of the Catholic religion; but in Paris, where I was surrounded by relations who would have treated me, or at least affected to treat me, as a maniac, had I said a word on the subject, what was I to do! We returned to England in November, and so ill was I, that I could not turn in my bed, move or sleep; there was therefore no time to be lost. I had also devoted my time, as much as possible, to reading, the only employment of which I was capable, and the result of my reading and reflection was an increased anxiety to die a Catholic. But I knew not a single Catholic in London, and how then proceed towards the accomplishment of my desired conversion? At length I recollected that the name of the Catholic Bishop in London was Brampston; I looked in the directory and found his address. and my mind was now made up to send for him. I had been lately much worse, I could feel and understand that I was in imminent danger, and therefore one morning, after a night of sleepless agony of mind and body, I summoned resolution and said to my mother as soon as she came to see me: "Mother, I must be a Catholic; I must see a priest. What does it signify what people say! I may die; it can do no harm to any one if I die a Catholic, and it is the only way to save my soul. I am convinced that the Catholic

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Church is the only true Church. Do then, I beseech you, write to the Catholic Bishop, Dr. Brampston; he lives in Golden Square. Write, if you love me." I think I can still see my mother's astonished face-but my dying request was not to be refused; and accordingly she did as I requested, merely saying: "Well, if you will be a Roman Catholic, I suppose you must, but I hope I shall be allowed to continue as I am." How I lived through that day I cannot tell, except through the help of that God, who has always so wonderfully preserved me. My solicitude too under the circumstances amounted to actual pain; but on the morning of the twelfth the answer to the note arrived in the person of Dr. Gradwell, since dead, who came to see me. During his conversation with me my mother was in the room: even on that first visit it pleased the Almighty in his goodness to open her mind and heart for the reception of truth; and she was already convinced that she had been brought up in error. When the bishop paid his second visit, giving up all the prejudices of her youth and education, she really believed the Catholic Church, and began the practices of religion by abstaining on the next Friday, and hearing mass on the following Sunday. The visits of Dr. Gradwell were frequent and his conversation always instructive; and the change which those few days wrought in me was surprising. Oh! I felt as if a weight had fallen from my heart; I felt contented: I was at peace: I felt as if I had already experienced a foretaste of Paradise. I

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could breathe, and speak, and pray. I had learnt even to rejoice in my sufferings. My health was gradually somewhat restored; and on Wednesday in Easter week, the 25th of April, 1832, we both made our first communion in the Bavarian Chapel in London. Two months after we left England for the continent, and on the 18th of January, 1833, we received the sacrament of confirmation from Cardinal Weld in Rome.

Since our conversion to the Catholic faith great had been the astonishment, the displeasure, the alienation, the anger of some of our relations and friends. They condemned, in unmeasured terms, our conscientious change; but they did so without examining the arguments by which it was, humanly speaking, effected, or a single article of the doctrines which we embraced. It is not my intention to urge those arguments or state these doctrines. For this I must refer the inquiring protestant to far, far abler pens, to a Berrington, a Lingard, a Milner. a Bossuet, or, if they so prefer, let me refer them to some enlightened Catholic clergyman; but, and I like to recur to early associations, in my humble judgment, with those who profess to believe the holy Catholic Church, the very name of Catholic ought to be decisive. It was decisive with the great St. Augustin fourteen hundred years ago against the sectaries of his day, who would fain call themselves Catholics. must," says he, "hold the Christian religion and the communion of that Church which is Catholic, and is called Catholic not only by her

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own children, but also by her enemies; for heretics and schismatics, whether they will or no. call the Catholic no other than Catholic, for they cannot be understood unless they give them that name, which all the world gives them." (Book of true religion.) Recounting the reasons that kept him in the Church, he says: "The very name Catholic keeps me, of which this Church alone, not without reason, has so retained possession that, although all heretics desire to be called Catholics, yet if a stranger ask them where Catholics meet, none of the heretics dare point out his own house or his church." (Ep. Fund. c. 4.) How uniform is truth! Who would not imagine that he has been reading the language of a Catholic bishop of the present day? And who does not see, if, laying aside all worldly interests and considerations, we but open our eyes to the light of truth, that an exclusively national church, of comparatively recent origin, founded by bad men, cemented by persecution. sacrilege, and blood, and protesting in the face of day against the Catholic Church, cannot possibly be the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church: whilst, on the other hand, who does not recognise in the Catholic Church all the characters of the Church of Christ? One in faith. professing one and the same doctrine at all times and in all places, and governed by one visible head, the Catholic Church alone presents that essential characteristic of truth, which is unity, for she alone is ONE: holy in her origin, "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and

prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,"* holy in her doctrine which she received from Jesus Christ and his apostles, inculcating not only the precepts but also the counsels of the gospel, and exhibiting them practically in her members, many of whom have been in all ages, and still are eminently conspicuous for purity and holiness, fathers, martyrs, confessors, and virgins; and containing within her the sacraments, the sources of grace and holiness, she is not only one but she is also HOLY: taking her origin not from the caprices or passions of man, but from her founder Jesus Christ and his apostles, and perpetuated by apostolic men in unbroken succession even to our own days, she is not only one and holy but she is also APOSTOLIC; whilst, on the other hand, composed, as protestantism is, of various and discordant sects, embracing, as several of those sects confessedly do, monstrous and even blasphemous doctrines, dating its origin, and often deriving its sectarian name from unholy men centuries after the apostolic times, how can the heterogeneous and incongruous and revolting mass of opinions called protestantism be considered by any reflecting mind as the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church? But my object is not to argue, but to narrate; and be it recollected that faith is not the result of reasoning but the gift of God. With every succeeding day of my life, therefore, do I thank God with increasing

^{*} Eph. ii. 20.

fervour for the grace of my vocation to the Catholic church, for having, in his mercy, chosen me from amongst thousands, "that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." What have I done to entitle me to such favours!

I have now little more to add than to state a fact. Since my conversion to catholicity it has always been my earnest wish to become a barefooted Carmelite Nun, according to the reform of St. Teresa. I was, however, assured by those whom I consulted on the subject that, for one so delicate and so tenderly reared, it was impossible to bear the austerities of that institute: and that the order of the visitation, founded by S. Francis of Sales, was the only one that I could hope to have sufficient health or strength to embrace. When considering the difficulties that opposed my wishes, a severe relapse cut off all hope of their speedy accomplishment. In the melancholy state of health to which I was reduced during the two succeeding years, it appeared preposterous to think of becoming a nun in any order. My hopes of becoming one even in the austere order of the barefooted Carmelites never, notwithstanding, forsook me; but I could not, in contradiction to every one, mention my apparently delusive hopes. I continued extremely ill until the beginning of last September, at Genoa, when one night, reflecting on the various proofs which I experienced of my vocation, not excluding my early visit to Canford, I firmly resolved, and that resolution I humbly offered at the throne of grace, that, should it

please God to restore me to health, I should certainly consecrate myself for ever to him in religion, by becoming a Carmelite nun. Next morning I rose from my bed not only free from pain and debility and deformity, for my back had become deformed,* but full of health and vigour; and, thanks to the giver of all good gifts, have ever since continued so! That God, who inspired the wish, was able to give health and strength to accomplish the good purpose. Accordingly I have since had the happiness to realise my only ambition on earth, that of abandoning the world for ever, and becoming a spouse of Jesus Christ in the Teresian Order.

In conclusion I have now only to implore those who may peruse this little narrative, to pray for me that I may faithfully co-operate with the divine graces and favours, that I may fulfil God's holy law, love him who so loved me, and "suffer and die" in the footsteps of S. Teresa, for him who suffered and died for mankind on a cross.

Rome. 1835.

L. T. H.

* The editor of this volume was informed by Lady Hartwell, the young lady's mother, that so deformed was her daughter's back that her favourite little dog used to rest on the protuberance. The editor subsequently saw her at Ronciglione, and her figure was altogether exempt from the deformity, being perfectly erect.



TO

THE PIOUS READER.

In this little work. I present you with a simple and brief compendium and specimen, as it were, of the life of a servant of God, written more at large with much learning and unction, by Monaig. Alberrotti, Count of Cesa and Bishop of Arezzo, and reserved for publication at some more convenient time.* The subject of this little piece of biography, is Sister Teresa Margaret Redi. of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who departed this life on the seventh of March, 1770, in the convent of S. Teresa in Florence, in which she was a Religious. Although at her death. which occurred four years after her religious profession, she had reached only her twentysecond year, yet her virtues excited the admiration of all who had the advantage of her acquaintance, so as to awaken a most lively interest for her canonization. Moved by the fame of her

• In the title-page, this most worthy Prelate declares, on his sacred and venerable word, that he faithfully extracted it from the ordinary process of her life, drawn up in Florence, and published in Rome, by decree of the Holy See, so far back as the year 1786. We have done nothing more than follow it with the most scrupulous exactness; and from it are copied literally the passages in italics.

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sanctity, which from Florence had reached the Vatican, the Sovereign Pontiff, Clement XIV., of holy memory, wished that a distinct relation should be made thereof; and having read it with wonder and emotion, declared himself desirous to see the cause brought before the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The circumstances of the times have retarded for some years the activity of the individual interested in its promotion; but the period we trust is not distant that is to satisfy the wishes of the numerous and fond admirers of this servant of God, sanctioned as they are so nobly by those of a Roman Pontiff.

I give you notice, beforehand, that in the perusal of the following pages you will meet with no accounts of ecstasies, visions, revelations, heavenly apparitions, prophecies, or other extraordinary gifts of the same character, which, through a certain superficial levity, not unfrequently usurp and absorb the attention of many readers, causing them to lose sight altogether of that which, in the views of God, should constitute the object of our principal and most mature reflection, that is, the virtues by which, and not solely, to use the language of the Doctors, by graces gratuitously given, the Saints are Saints. Of this, which is no doubt valuable and even venerable, the life of Sister Teresa Margaret will present you with scarcely any thing; but it will exhibit such virtues and gifts as exalt the excellence even of virtues themselves. In all points of view she will appear to you perfect, and hence wonderful; for as a child in her fa-

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ther's house, as a boarder in a convent, and finally as a religious, she always fulfilled the duties of her state with the greatest perfection. The delicate minuteness of these, if I may so call them, miniatures of virtues, the proud man superciliously despises and derides, calling them the frivolities of little minds; but sound philosophy flings back upon him his contumelies, and establishes as a venerable moral thereon: that it is more difficult to be great in little and continuous things, than in things great and illustrious; that it is more difficult and glorious to fulfil perfectly one's duties, than to perform single exploits which duty does not demand.

This is not the place to establish the truth of these most important maxims, applauded by every one that understands well the human heart. I however assert that the virtues of Sister Teresa Margaret, confined within the little circle of a few years and of the walls of a convent, have all the appearance, as we shall see, of the most sublime heroism.

It pleased God to preserve her in a state of innocence, angelic rather than human: he inspired her with a spirit of the most austere penance; and lighted up in her heart a most bright flame of charity, that served to render her, although hidden and unknown, a true martyr. "This tender virgin," you will naturally exclaim, "is a most beautful copy of S. Aloysius Gonzaga!" So I also think; and am accustomed to call her with a transport of tender veneration: "Sisterspirit of that great Saint!" Study then with

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pious affection, so beauteous a picture; and earnestly endeavour to produce in your own life and manners a new and no less beautiful copy. To this study are, it is true, invited in the first place, Nuns; but horror of sin, christian mortification, the love of God and of our neighbour, are virtues necessary to all Christians; and, notwithstanding a difference in the objects and manner of their exercise according to the different conditions and circumstances of men, they are virtues suited to every state of life, nay, necessary to the attainment of eternal salvation.

THE LIFE

OF

SISTER TERESA MARGARET REDI, OF THE HEART OF JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

BIETH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE SERVANT OF GOD, SISTER TERESA MARGARET.

SISTER Teresa Margaret, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was born in Arezzo, a very ancient city of Tuscany, on the eve of our Lady of Carmel, the fifteenth of July, 1747, of noble parents, the Cav. Ignatius Redi, son of the excellent poet of that celebrated name, and the no less illustrious Camilla Ballati, of Sienna. The high birth of the servant of God, I particularly mention, as S. Jerome did that of S. Paula, not through worldly pride, but for the edification of my readers, that contrasted with the seductive brilliancy of the world and the riches with which Providence had furnished her, the efficacy of the holy grace of God, which induced this his servant, in the first flower of youth, to make a voluntary sacrifice of

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those idols which the world adores, may shine forth with greater lustre. In holy baptism she received the name of Anna Maria. She was endowed by the beneficent hand of God with that happy disposition which we should call, "born for piety." and which Solomon calls, "a good From an exterior, beautiful, graceful. and singularly modest, shone forth a spirit still more beauteous, simple, sincere, docile, and above all, most pious. She had not yet completed her fifth year, when, from that general and not very clear idea of God which her pious parents, and still more her Guardian Angel, to whom from infancy she professed a tender devotion, had begun to instil into her, she felt herself sweetly moved to love him; and, by a happy impulse of extraordinary grace, to her it appeared that so naturally should the sweet sensations of love follow the knowledge of God, that when asked by the celebrated Father Ildefonsus Frediani, of S. Aloysius Gonzaga of our Order, a man, to use the words of Monsig. Albergotti oreat in science and still greater in virtue, if she thought she fulfilled the precept imposed on all, in the opinion of S. Thomas, of turning to God with some homage of the heart, as soon as a knowledge of him beams in the mind? she replied, "Surely every one does so:" that is, begins to love the Infinite Good as soon as they attain the use of reason. Would to God that like her all could say: "Jesus knows well that from a little child I never had any other wish but to please him and become a Saint." Jesus, no doubt, knew it

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west, or he was the author of all her spiritual good: but such was also the impression of those who saw her from her infancy entirely devoted to retirement and silence, shunning all things earthly and despising the world. But what won the hearts of all who beheld her was, to observe her anxious and eager curiosity to know who was God, what his greatness, and what she could do to please him. When any one spoke of this. or of the passion of Christ, or of the actions of the Saints, Anna Maria fixed her eyes on him so attentively, and with a certain expression of such affectionate, heartfelt interest, that it was impossible not to be surprised and affected. She had not reached her seventh year, when she began to ascend to God from his creatures, and to comprehend the mute language of the stars, the plants, the flowers, of all creatures, who spoke to her of him, and invited her to admire his greatness and love his infinite goodness. She was only six years old, when her aunt, a lady of discernment, observing her with attention, admired in her a certain rare tenor of virtue, constant and uniform, in the variety of little events proportioned to her age; and remarked with greater surprise. that she sometimes stood with her eyes fixed on heaven, as one engaged in tranquil meditation on the greatness of God and sweetly devoting to him the affections of her heart. It is hence easy to conceive how so pure a soul hated sin, and even the least shadow of sin. Such indeed was the fact. The flower of innocence she preserved unblighted throughout the whole course of life,

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and in death presented it to her Jesus such as she received it in holy baptism. Such is the attestation of her Confessers, who found it difficult to discover in her, even when grown up, any deliberate fault, however light, to constitute matter for absolution.

From her seventh year, however, she began to frequent the sacrament of Penance, and from the beginning approached it with sentiments of compunction, so lively, and of such horror at the slightest shadow of sin, more imaginary in general than real, that on hearing her speak on the subject, her father was tenderly moved, as were also her spiritual directors; and this occurred more particularly in the convent, when on hearing one of the sisters mention some grievous fault, she exclaimed: "Is it possible that our good God has been offended?" and on uttering these words fainted.

CHAPTER II.

SHE IS PLACED FOR HER EDUCATION IN THE CON-VENT OF S. APPOLLONIA, IN FLORENCE, WHERE SHE IS ADMITTED TO HER PIRST COMMUNION.

THE house of the Cav. Ignatius Redi, might be compared to a garden of Christian virtues; and there, as we have already seen, began to bud forth, sweet and lovely, the soul of the young Anna Maria. It however pleased the heavenly

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Husbandman to transplant it into another favourite sequestered garden, in which are preserved the rarest and most precious flowers; that is to say, he inspired her pious parents to place her, for her education, in the noble convent of S. Apollonia, in Florence.

This sacrifice was painful to them in proportion to their love of so amiable a daughter; and in parting with her parents and brothers, she herself felt a degree of pain, commensurate with the tender affection which a heart so well formed must have cherished towards them. But obedience determined her to submit at once to the disposition of her father; and the idea of being able to serve her God still better in the cloister than in the world, caused her to fly with joy to this retreat. Scarcely had she set foot within its walls, when she began to diffuse around the odour of Jesus Christ; and in the midst of holy recluses and pious young ladies, notwithstanding the veil of humility, and her study not to appear different from her companions in anything, there soon manifested itself a spirit that attracted notice. How docile and obedient to her mistress. whose intimations she always obeyed with cheerfulness and promptitude? How attentive to, yet natural and decorous towards, her companions! When conversing with them, she always appeared cheerful, and altogether exempt from those caprices and whims which are common to that age. Always devout, she knew how to sprinkle indifferent conversation with pious reflections, and bring it back to God with a certain

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graceful ease of manner, that rendered them enamoured with devotion and with her who so sweetly promoted it. The additional time which she was able, without observation, to dedicate to retirement and to her particular exercises of piety, she knew how to seize with a holy dexterity, and employ with a no less laudable avarice.

In choir she seemed an angel, by the unaffected composure natural to her; and by a certain fixedness of her eyes, often bedewed with tears, by occasional sighs that unconsciously escaped her heart towards the Blessed Sacrament, one might discover the pure flame of holy love, which she nurtured towards the Supreme Good.

She sighed for the Holy Communion; and this intense desire increased in her heart every day; but she never ventured to make it known. Humility sealed her lips in silence; but the holy fire spontaneously betrayed itself; and to satisfy her devout wishes, which beamed from her heart in her holily envious glances at those who had communicated, in her broken accents, her sighs when this Sacrament of Love was mentioned, she was allowed to approach it for the first time at the age of nearly ten years. At the first intimation of this intelligence, her consolation was unutterable; and with the anxiety with which she desired it, corresponded the preparation with which she disposed herself for its reception. The spiritual favours which she received, she concealed beneath a thick veil of artless simplicity, that gave even to her most studied acts of virtue.

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all the appearance of being natural; but full well did the whole tenour of her life, wonderfully more exact and devout, display the abundant fruit which she happily derived from the holy table, whenever she was permitted to approach it,

Most circumspect in every action, in measuring every thought as well as word, never to do any thing that might be displeasing to her God. in which consists the most certain proof of holy charity, she, however, once conceived a fear of having fallen into some fault, and in consequence felt such uneasiness and alarm, that she not only could not close her eyes that night, but passed it entirely in tears of compunction. Here, however, this holy creature was happily under a mistake; for her confessor, to whose feet she flew the moment he arrived next morning, having heard the cause of her affliction, consoled her with the assurance that she had committed no fault whatever; with his blessing, she resumed her wonted serenity, and retired in peace.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUATION OF THE VIRTUOUS CONDUCT OF THE BERVANT OF GOD IN THE CONVENT, WHERE, THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE BLESSED VINGIN, SHE RECEIVES A FAVOUR CONSIDERED MIRACULOUS.

HITHERIO she had opened the secrets of her heart to no one, nor used she to confer with her



confessor farther than was necessary for sacramental confession, which with her required but a very short time. But to adhere to her adonted system of doing nothing that would distinguish her from others, or make her singular, even by conferring more at length with her confessor. and, at the same time, to provide herself with a secure guide, which in her heart she felt to be necessary, she thought of having recourse to her parent, and of taking him as the father of her soul, as he was of her body. In the tender consolation which the Cay, Ignatius Redi experienced in this sweet converse with her, the Almighty conferred on him a rich reward, for the christian education which he had given by words, and still more by example, to his privileged daughter. It is to be regretted, that, too scrupulous in complying with her humble wishes. he burnt one after another the letters that he received from her, full, as he himself vouches in his attestation, of sentiments the most exalted of God, and of the most refined christian perfection. But the Rev. D. Pietro Pellegrini, a wise and experienced director, having been appointed spiritual father of that convent, to him she gave some insight into her interior, probably at the suggestion of her father, with whom however she did not discontinue her spiritual communications. The treasures of grace that enriched her soul, the worthy priest soon discovered, more by his own lights than by his conferences with Anna Maria. for in the shortness of her visits to the confessional she never made any change, making it a

point, as before, never to remain there longer than her companions, and this only on the days on which it was usual for all to present themselves at the sacred tribunal. The dispositions of that innocent soul, the enlightened D. Pietro understood: and as an expert pilot, conducting her according to the gentle breathings of the Spirit, the principal guide of every soul, he cultivated it in its simplicity in the way of love. He instructed her more perfectly in prayer, prescribed and sanctioned the mortifications, which she herself had already begun to practise, almost from infancy, in her paternal home. What perhaps she found least easy to conceal, was the tender and truly filial devotion, which, in common with all the saints, she cherished towards the Virgin Mother of God. who vouchsafed to give her a solemn pledge of the special protection, with which she watched over her, preserving her in a manner considered miraculous, on occasion of a serious fall down a long flight of stairs, with a little chafer full of fire in her hand. In the act of falling, she invoked her dear mother, and found herself on her feet at the bottom of the stairs, where there was a picture of the blessed Virgin, without the slightest injury even to her dress.

It is easy to conceive that this angel must have been the edification and delight of the whole convent: such in fact was the case; and besides deserving to be so considered, by her sincere, humble, and sweet deportment, wonderfully aided by her virginal modesty, she won by her charity the affections of all. Of noble birth and delicate frame, she, however, offered to assist not only the nuns but the servants, in the most irksome duties, with such grace and natural ease withal, that while she performed a thousand little offices, it appeared as if they were an amusement to her, not a labour. This was the result not only of her charity, but also of her humility, which was her darling virtue, filling her heart with a profound contempt of herself; for loving so tenderly her Jesus, she could not but look upon herself as the servent of all, aware that he had said of himself, I come not to be served but to serve.

Esteemed by her mistress, and affectionately venerated by her companions, she was sometimes left by the former to supply her place, certain that nothing unbecoming could occur, whilst she presided over the other young ladies, who were by no means displeased to see her so preferred, so truly had she become mistress, not only of their esteem, but also of their affection.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WONDERFUL MANNER IN WHICH SHE IS CALLED
BY GOD TO OUR HOLY INSTITUTE.

Amonest the many gifts conferred by Providence on the order of S. Teresa, during the last century, are to be numbered Anna Maria in Italy, and the Rev. Mother Sister Teresa, of S. Augustine in France. The latter, the daughter of Lewis XV., passed from a court to the state of a

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barefooted Carmelite Nun. to the astonishment of the whole world, and appeared in religion a star as bright as the moon in its zenith; and the former was a flower so beautiful, so fragrant, so perfect in all its parts, as to form an ornament of great value in the bosom of the Church, the spouse of the divine Lamb. The life of Teresa of S. Augustine, has been written at large in various languages: of Anna Maria we now present a portrait in miniature; and if the former astonishes. the latter captivates. Of young ladies, who approve themselves so well disposed as was Anna Maria, in the eves of all, it is often predicted that they are to become nuns. This her confessor saw very clearly; and it is surprising that her judicious father also did not see it, unless indeed. observing it as others did, he was unwilling to pay attention to the circumstance, as generally happens in things that we dread, almost convincing ourselves that, by not consenting to foresee, we shall succeed in escaping them. In fine. at the age of sixteen, our little angel had resolved to consecrate herself to God in religion, but in which of the many orders that adorn the Church. she was to realize her resolution, was still undecided. The spouse of virgins, however, destined her for that of our holy mother S. Teresa, and chose that S. Teresa herself should be the harbinger of this his decree. Returning one day in September, 1763, towards the interior of the convent, from the parlour or grating, where she had been with the nuns to receive the farewell visit. made principally to herself, of the noble lady,

Cecilia Albergotti, also of Arezzo, who was about to take the veil in our convent of S. Teresa. where she still is an inmate under the name of Sister Teresa Crocifissa of Jesus, Anna Maria suddenly felt herself surprised by a violent interior motion of the Spirit, in which she sensibly heard, or at least seemed to hear, these words: I am Teresa of Jesus, and I will have thee amonast mu daughters. Astonished and almost beside herself between emotions of joy and fear, she hastens to present herself before the blessed sacrament, and earnestly implores the Lord to enable her to understand if that voice were from him, and if she should believe and follow it. Again she feels lighted up within her the fervent spirit which she had before experienced, and hears repeated still more distinctly: I am Teresa of Jesus, and I tell thee that ere long thou shalt be in my convent. At this second allocution all her doubts vanished. and in perfect composure she resolved to embrace the institute of that saint. This secret, however, she kept to herself, without revealing it even to her father, who, however, removed her, a few months after, from the convent to his own house. that there she might decide, and declare freely, the state of life she wished to embrace.

CHAPTER V.

SHE IS TAKEN BACK TO HER FATHER'S HOUSE.—HER EDIFYING CONDUCT THEREIN.

During the few months that she spent at home, so edifying was the tenour of life pursued by Anna Maria, that it would be unpardonable not to describe it with some particularity. By quitting the convent to return home, she in fact changed localities. The grace of God, which had already taken possession of her heart, reigned there alone and without a rival; and she knew how to keep herself united to her Lord every where, as well as she could have done in the strictest enclosure. True it is, that the house of her pious parents might be considered as a convent, a temple of the most solid piety; but the whole tenour of her life was wonderful in this. particularly that in the continual practice of true devotion superior to her age, she knew how to conduct herself with such ease of manner, as to render it necessary almost to study her, in order to discover, that what had all the air of the most natural simplicity, was in her the work of virtue.

In general, she remained retired and alone in her room, engaged in reading or prayer, and in employments suited to her rank and age, which she knew so well how to combine with interior communion with God, in which, in fine, consists the entire beauty and sanctity of the soul. When called, she did not however, decline with repul-

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sive rudeness, to enter into conversation, nor was there occasion for repeated entreaties and solicitations to drag her into society. When summoned, she obeyed, in her own easy natural manner, with promptitude, lady-like modesty, and virginal urbanity; but her pious parents, who knew her taste well, and were most grateful to the Giver of all good gifts for a daughter of such rare worth, left her as much as possible at liberty to follow her own devout inclinations.

She frequented the holy sacraments with the most lively devotion; and, following the example of the angelic St. Aloysius, divided the week into preparation and thanksgiving for the holy communion. She imitated him also in her modesty. in the continual and studied contradiction of her most innocent natural inclinations, in the refined ingenuity, with which she found ways and means for its exercise, and also in the mortification of her innocent body. To leave on the mind a more lasting impression of all this, I shall here observe. that she never asked for any thing to gratify her own taste; that she allowed herself to be dressed and fitted out as it pleased others; that when dressed in the morning, she remained so the whole day, although sometimes her dress was such as to give her pain and inconvenience. other young ladies of her rank, this would seem a great deal; yet we have to add, that, although extremely sensible of heat and cold, she never asked to diminish or increase the quantity of her dress. But to keep her engagement with Jesus. whom she already adored as her spouse, she did

much more, not only denying herself as much as possible every gratification however innocent, but afflicting and mortifying herself in every way that she possibly could.

Her mortification of the eyes was extreme. Long after her return to Arezzo, she did not know the street nor the walls of the church and college of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. where she went constantly for her devotions, and near which she lived. It is to her father who suspected it, and discovered the matter without her knowledge, we are indebted for this fact. She spoke very little, and only what politeness rendered necessary; but her silence had no appearance of rudeness, heaviness, or ill-breeding, being relieved by a countenance always cheerful, and interrupted by seasonable questions or sensible and well considered replies, rendering it a source of sweet and natural edification, and being also adorned with innocent graces, and sometimes with witty sayings. In eating, she sprinkled ashes and wormwood on her food, and with her usual ease of manner, denied herself the most savoury and delicate viands, scarcely tasting them, and sending them to some poor sick woman. When she sat down, not having it in her power to mortify herself otherwise, she kept one foot raised from the ground; when she prayed, she studied to do so in the most inconvenient posture, kneeling on the edge or corner of the bench; but some prayers of particular devotion she recited prostrate, with her arms extended in form of a cross, or what was more

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usual and more painful, with her knees on her hands against the bare ground.

Besides allowing scarcely any attendance on her person or in her room, she often employed herself, as she used in the convent, in some menial offices, taking part in the domestic occupations of the family; but she did so in such a way as to make it appear an amusement, and with such secrecy that no one discovered it. except by finding every thing done, and that with the greatest exactness. To prepare herself for the rigours of the Teresian life, she often slept on the hard palleas, taking the trouble herself of removing the bed in the evening, and replacing it in the morning, in order to conceal the matter from her maid, and besides the labour, which was not inconsiderable to so delicate a young lady, this alone drew largely on the time allotted for repose. Sometimes she lay on the bare ground. She moreover practised the severe penances of frequent disciplines, which sometimes drew blood. Her waist and other parts of her innocent body, she bound with knotted cords and small chains armed with sharp points. Such was the life of Anna Maria in her father's house. One consolation only she allowed herself, and enjoyed often, that of remaining in the evening, when all the others had retired to rest, in holy and spiritual conference with her excellent father, in which, as he himself often mentioned with the tenderness of devout recollection, he admired in her the profoundest ideas of God, and a knowledge and study of the highest perfection in the christian virtues.

CHAPTER VI.

SHE MAKES KNOWN HER VOCATION AND PERSKVERES IN IT, IN SPITE OF THE STRONGEST OPPOSITION.

Bur the grace of the Holy Ghost, which called her to the cloister, ceased not sweetly to stimulate her heart, urging her to disclose her vocation, in order to arrive at its accomplishment. After some months and much prayer, she at length did so, first to her then confessor, Father Jerome Maria Cioni, of the Society of Jesus, who, almost on the spot, recognising all the marks of a true vocation, gave his assent and approbation. How much is our holy reform indebted to this venerable society! Of this the life and works of our holy mother Teresa are the most authentic and glorious monument, to which might be appended a long catalogue reaching from her times to the present; but confining ourselves to the sole benefit, certainly the most important for a religious order, of providing it with subjects, it must be acknowledged, that the brightest ornaments of our monasteries and convents, the most exemplary and learned religious of both sexes, have been, at all times and in all countries, supplied us by the disciples of S. Ignatius, sent us from their confessionals, their schools, and their congregations. But to return to our history, following up his

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approbation of her holy project, her prudent director advised her to break it, in the first instance, to her mother. The day chosen for this second step towards religion was her birth-day. in which she closed her seventeenth year, the eve of the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, whose institute she had resolved to embrace. How beautiful must not this angel have appeared. when, after the most fervent prayers offered up to God for the favourable issue of the undertaking. she presented herself before her mother with a countenance full of fortitude and firmness, which shed a graceful glow of more than usual animation over her natural, sweet, humble, and respectful air. With composed demeanour, she revealed to her the fixed resolve, which she had made, to take the veil in the Carmelite convent of S. Teresa in Florence. At the announcement, her pious mother stood amazed as well as deeply distressed; but still more surprised and afflicted was her father, to whom her mother, accompanied by the above-mentioned confessor, disclosed the state of life chosen by his tenderly loved daughter. He was literally horror-struck, comparing the slender form and delicate constitution of Anna Maria, with the austerity of the Teresian institute; but, satisfied that if God called her to it, he would give her the necessary strength to bear its weight, he spared no pains to ascertain. if it was really God that inspired her with the idea.

Let it not, however, be supposed that the prudent and pious Cav. Ignatius Redi adopted the



foolish custom of exposing a child, who had declared for the cloister, to all the seductions of the world. He did not test her vocation by conducting her to theatres and parties, shutting his eyes to the sight of every insidious vulture that might hover round the dove, and remaining an envious spectator to observe the effect, and conclude that if the incantious one should suffer herself to be caught, the principle of her vaunted determination must have been not a heavenly call, but the fancy of an inexperienced girl, the suggestion of some gloomy confessor, or the enticement of some cloistered relations or friends. The excellent father of Anna Maria was aware that these are scandals and temptations, not proofs and standards by which to ascertain the disposition of a youthful girl, who in them might lose, without much difficulty, not only her vocation to the cloister, which might not be real, but that vocation which is most certain, and by which all are called to the observance of the law of God. Against this law nothing is more easy in such circumstances than miserably to offend: and should even this enormous evil not occur. it is almost certain that the pure and susceptible imagination remains troubled and contaminated. to be a source of torment for many years after, if not for life. To ascertain the will of God in a matter of such importance, and of such interest to his heart, as the future state of life of a daughter, whom he not only loved with the greatest tenderness, but esteemed, and we may say venerated, he had recourse to the enlightened ministers of

religion. Hence, not withstanding his high respect for Father Cioni, he wished her vocation to be examined by other ecclesiastics, whom he knew to be distinguished for learning and experience. For this purpose, he lost no time in inviting from the neighbouring town of Castiglione, the Canon Joseph Maria Tonci of Sienna, a man of eminent piety, learning, and discrimination in matters of spiritual life; and also requested the Rev. Father S. Colombino of S. Mary, provincial of the barefooted Carmelites, to examine her vocation. Both knew well how to penetrate the heart of the servant of God, and there recognise the motions of the Holy Spirit. The experiment made by the Father Provincial was the severest, for he, to terrify her, painted to her in strong, and lively, and almost exaggerated colours, the austerities of the order; yet he had the sweet consolation to see her not only altogether unmoved by all this. but on the contrary, more firm and tranquil in her expressed determination of becoming a Teresian nun. Nothing but the Spirit of God could have rendered so delicate a young lady, in the bloom of youth, superior to the weakness of her sex. To the approbation given by these holy men to the vocation of Anna Maria, Monsig. Inghirami, Bishop of Arezzo, also united his venerable sanction. Looking upon these proofs as sufficient to satisfy him, that God willed the sacrifice which he called upon him to make of himself and of his dear daughter, he, not without unutterable pain. bowed his head to the divine dispensations, and gave her leave to write to the prioress of the con-

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went chosen by her, praying to be accepted into their community, and admitted to the usual probations of the institute.

But if the experiments used by the father of Anna Maria were so judicious and Christianlike, the devil failed not to try his expedients to divert her from obeying the divine call. She had a female domestic who dared to abuse her confidence and the opportunity of conversing familiarly with her, to whisper in her ear some profane ideas, to induce her to cast a glance on the world which she had protested to abhor and renounce. A cousin also, with that influence and authority which relationship and years much superior to her own naturally gave him, sought to induce her to change her mind: but to no purpose: for Anna Maria, already bound firmly in heart to Jesus Christ by the sacred ties. of spouse, partly by seeming not to understand. and partly by a tranquil and dignified disdain, deprived the enemy of even the least hope of making her vacillate in her resolution.

The most terrible assault, however, which the constancy of the servant of God had to withstand, was that which, without perhaps intending it, and by the sole impulse of natural feeling, which he afterwards deeply regretted, was given her by her pious father. He had never spoken to her about her vocation, but continued to converse with her, even when they were alone, as if her intentions were altogether unknown to him, and this from a motive of prudence, which led him to apprehend what, in fact, occurred. One

evening after supper, when the rest of the family had retired, being left together as usual to talk on pious subjects, seized suddenly with an emotion of paternal tenderness towards his daughter. now become every moment more beloved, particularly on account of the spiritual gifts which he continued to discover in her more clearly and in greater abundance, the Cav. Ignatius exclaimed: And is it then true, my dear child, that you wish to abandon me? and in uttering these words, burst into a flood of tears. Here let us recollect the affectionate nature of Anna Maria, and then conceive what an effect the expression of such intense grief, which she occasioned to her father. and to such a father, must have produced on her heart. But behold how the grace of the Holy Spirit guided and governed her on this most trying occasion. Let us hear it from her father himself. At this surprise, the greatest perhaps that, considering the circumstances, could touch her tender heart. she remained for some time as if in ecstasy, and undaunted before me; and then, leaving me in silence, retired to her chamber. Those who understand the human heart, and know how it is guided by nature and expresses itself on very trying occasions, can well conceive what it is to remain unmoved under sudden perplexity, and retire in silence. The love of God, which gave her strength to overcome herself under so strong an appeal to natural affection, calculated the merit which she acquired with her Jesus in this dangerous and delicate victory. After this, her father, convinced still more of the will of God in

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her regard, and unwilling to give it the least resistance, hastened to dispose everything for its most prompt execution.

CHAPTER VII.

SHE IS RECEIVED ON TRIAL BY THE NUNS OF S. TERESA; AND AFTER A DEVOUT PILGRIMAGE TO THE SANCTUARIES OF LAVERNIA, AND SOME VISITS OF PIETY IN FLORENCE, SHE ENTERS THE CONVENT.

In the meantime arrived the answer of the prioress of S. Teresa, to the request made her, as we said, by the servant of God. As might have been expected, it was most favourable to her wishes: and accordingly the Chevalier lost no time in making arrangements, to conduct her whither God called her. Previously, however, he had the pleasure of gratifying another pious wish of his daughter, who had never before asked him for any favour, on the principle adopted from her childhood, of never asking anything. but always leaving everything to the disposal of Divine Providence. Influenced, it is true, not by her own wishes, but by the suggestion of her mother, she begged to be conducted to visit the places sanctified by the seraphic S. Francis, her particular patron, in the neighbouring mountains of Lavernia. This pious pilgrimage Anna Maria performed with the most devout recollection,

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and to the edification of all at whose houses she had to sojourn in the course of it; and thence returning to her native city, she prepared to leave it for ever, never to see it more.

The sixteenth of August, 1764, was the day fixed for her departure,-one of the happiest days of her life, but a day of deep affliction to all her family. Her mother was ill at the moment. and her good daughter went therefore to her bedside to receive her blessing, and bid her farewell. She knelt down by her bedside, and in the most graceful and respectful manner begged her blessing, thanked her, asked pardon, pressed her hand, kissed her, and bade the last adien. At that moment the full tide of maternal tenderness swelled in her mother's heart; overcome by deep emotion, she was unable to utter a word, and burst into a flood of tears. Anna Maria, however, not less intrepid than when she beheld her father weep, perfectly recollected, offers to God the grief which she confined altogether to her own bosom, without exhibiting the slightest indication of weakness. The Chevalier himself. deeply affected, distressed at the affliction of his wife, astonished at the firmness of his daughter, addresses a few words of consolation to the former, makes a sign to the latter to leave the room, and conducts her to the carriage, which was in waiting. Set out on our journey, he thus expresses himself in the process, without letting her perceive that I was observing her, I saw my daughter composed, immoveable, and silent during a full hour, after which, resuming her usual cheer-

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ful manner, she turned towards me, and commenced a calm and sensible conversation, and proceeded during the remainder of the journey with the most perfect tranquillity. The Saints are not of a nature different from ours: they are not made of bronze, but are like us in the weakness of the flesh: but, by their correspondence with the grace of God, they become superior to themselves. and to the ordinary class of imperfect Christians. The uncommon composure of our servant of God on this and similar trying occasions, her pauses. her serious silence, her changes of colour, which we shall again soon notice,-all prove the efforts, which the performance of some more difficult acts of virtue cost her, and which she was occasionally called on to exercise.

Arrived at Florence after a short journey, and having visited the nuns of S. Apollonia, where she had been for her education, had tasted the first fruits of the Spirit, and had received the precious gift of her vocation, which to her tender and grateful heart revived the sweetest and tenderest sentiments of gratitude, she took her last leave of those good Religious, who shed tears of sorrow at the idea of losing her. She thanked them in her usual most amiable manner; assured them that the memory of each and all of them would be ever dear to her; that she would beg of God unceasingly to reward them for the spiritual good which they had rendered her, and the affection with which they regarded her; but firm as usual, she parted from them without shedding a tear, not even when taking leave of

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her two sisters, who were then at school there, and afterwards became nuns, and with whom she conversed for some time in private.- no doubt to their great edification. Having performed this act of social and Christian duty, she hastened to her desired convent of S. Teresa. called by her then, and ever after, the house of angels. She parted from her much loved father. who, however he might have endeavoured to dissemble his feelings, gave sufficient proofs of the extreme pain he felt at the separation; and, without shedding a single tear, entered with her usual firmness the sacred cloister to commence the requisite probations, through which she might be enabled to take up her abode there for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE ENTERS ON THE CONVENTUAL PROBATIONS
WITH GREAT SPIRIT. THEY ARE INTERRUPTED
BY A PAINFUL ILLNESS, ATTENDED WITH MOST
SEVERE SUFFERINGS. SHE IS FINALLY ADMITTED
TO HER RECEPTION.

In the letter, in which Anna Maria begged of the prioress to be admitted on trial into the convent, she declared her object to be, to emulate the Religious in the holy love of God. She venerated them as so many angels; and hence it is natural to infer, that she would have looked upon herself as most unworthy of their society, would

have studied most anxiously to imitate their example, and would have been conspicuous from the very beginning for the most exact observance of all the rules and customs of that holy community in the practice of every virtue: and such, in truth, was the case. Not to fall into repetitions in this compendium. I shall here only observe, that such was the conduct of Anna Maria, during the period of probation, that, in humility, self-contempt, love of suffering and of austerities, in recollection, spirit of prayer, and unequivocal signs of a great love of God, she appeared, not as a secular recently entered to try the institute, but as a religious more advanced in virtue than in years of religious life; nay, to use the words of Monsig. Albergotti, an angel of perfection and a vessel of most singular election.

The four months, assigned for her probation, were drawing near to a close, and the time of her reception was now at hand—a consummation, as may well be supposed, ardently sighed for by our fervent postulant, when it pleased the Redeemer to exhibit towards this, his tender spouse, one of those delicate traits, the value of which is unknown to the world, and is understood only by the most enlightened and loving souls. He sent her a most painful malady, which not only delayed her reception, but even rendered it doubtful whether she should ever be able to realize her wishes. It consisted of a large tumour on her right knee, which she concealed for some days, continuing to perform her usual

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duties as if nothing were the matter, and, what is horrid to think, kneeling on it firm and immoveable without any support: but, at length, a burning fever, which seized her, revealed the secret, and obliged her to take to her bed. At the idea of being obliged to expose to the surgeon that part of her innocent body, the spotless young virgin wept through modesty; but she had to submit to the obedience that commanded, rather than to the necessity that required, the mortifi-After the expert surgeon had tried without success various emollients, to expel by gentle means the acrid humours collected there. which, for several days, caused her violent pain. and threatened inflammation, he was obliged to have recourse to an incision, which he made in the flesh with a lancet and pair of scissors, in form of a cross. The operation, as may well be supposed, was most painful; but from the preceding evening, when it was mentioned to her, it was accepted by the servant of God with the most humble resignation, and with a declaration that she submitted to it most willingly, in order to be made conformable to the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. She bore it in faithful conformity with her resolution; but as, at the most painful part of the operation, nature, compelled by violent agony, gave utterance to some inarticulate sounds of subdued complaint, she was much confounded, and repeatedly begged pardon, as if she had scandalized the surgeon and sisterhood, who were all deeply affected and much edified. But the sufferings of the servant

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coff God did not end with the operation on her knee; its cure was for a long time most painful:
—in the first place, on account of her modesty, which was painfully wounded whenever it was necessary to expose it to the surgeon; and in the next place, in consequence of the lint and bandaging necessary in such cases, she was obliged, until the wound began to heal, to lie on the same side; and had to endure, at the same time, the violent attacks of a burning fever.

All this is enough, and more than enough, to fill the reader with holy sympathy, and with admiration of the patience of Anna Maria; but another and a most sensible torment she endured voluntarily, for a long time, without any one having had the least suspicion of it. They observed in her countenance evident signs of acute pain, which appeared to be different from that caused by her knee; but who could imagine. that she would have had her hair full of those pins, that are used to keep it in order. The fact was discovered accidentally by her attached under-mistress, who was shocked at it, and who saw her weep bitterly when, contrary to her wishes, they were all removed. Who can think, without shuddering, of the pain that must have been caused by so many hair-pins, on which she laid her head, already but too much tormented by fever. To her, however, this additional torment was precious, because she looked upon it as a participation of the crown of thorns of her Redeemer, tortured throughout his whole sacred frame on the cross.

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These and similar thoughts constantly occupied her mind in the midst of her sufferings, or rather of her violent paroxysms, as they are called by the illustrious historian of her life; but their intensity, however acute and deep, did not prevent that holy soul from attending to her God. This was intelligible from her countenance, which bespoke devotion and recollection; and when she thought herself alone or unobserved, she refreshed her spirit with sweet, fervent, and loving ejaculations, heard chiefly by her good under-mistress, who watched by her all night during the most severe part of her illness.

She at length recovered, when it pleased her heavenly Spouse: and was full of consolation to find herself arrived at the wished-for moment, of receiving the holy habit of the Blessed Virgin. "But who knows if the nuns will give it me?" she said to herself, and was appalled by the apprehensions which the thought inspired .-Her humility presented her with an image of herself, so disfigured by innumerable defects, as to fill her with shame and horror; and persnaded her that, being unworthy to be admitted into that convent, which she considered and called a paradise of angels, she should be very justly rejected and excluded. She also thought that the circumstance of her recent illness, which attracted more serious attention to her delicacy and weakness of constitution, might afford the nuns an additional reason for not accepting her, as being unable to sustain the rigours of the institute. In these reflections, the

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pain of which to that fervent heart, which so ardently desired to see itself consecrated to Jesus Christ, may be more easily imagined than described, she passed many days, until the desired vet dreaded hour arrived, when she was informed, that she must leave the convent, in order to afford an opportunity of proposing her to the community-an ordeal, which was to be followed by her rejection, or due admission; and which, according to the laudable custom of that convent, should take place during her absence. But there is a most reasonable law, requiring that the aspirant first make this request of the Religious, assembled in the chapter-room; and what a beautiful and edifying sight did they not enjoy on this occasion! How much more delightful still was that enjoyed by the holy angels, our blessed Mother, and all the celestial court, to whom God may have unveiled her heartt

Inflamed with the most ardent desire of obtaining the object of her prayer, but, at the same time, trembling through fear of being excluded, Anna Maria, with an air of angelic composure, knelt in the centre of the chapter-room, and begged of the nuns, through charity, not to reject her from their society, as she declared she deserved for her numerous defects, of which she entreated pardon, and promised amendment; and this she hoped to obtain more readily by the help of their prayers, and the incentive of their example.

. The good nuns wept with tenderness; and



enamoured still more with the virtues of Anna Maria, affectionately promised to accede to her wishes. They thanked God for the gift which He bestowed on them in her, and mutually reminded each other of the anticipations they had formed on first seeing her—anticipations, which were now so happily about to be realized; that is, that in her they acquired an already formed daughter of the holy mother, S. Teresa, of whom she would be one of the most perfect copies.

Anna Maria, therefore, left the convent full of joy, and was received by the illustrions lady, Isabella Nozzi, by birth the countess of Montanto, who, as we shall find more apprepriate to relate elsewhere, during the two months that she passed in her house, was edified and holily enamoured of, not to say devout towards, the innocent and virtuous young lady.

CHAPTER IX.

SHE RECEIVES THE HABIT OF A BAREFOOTED CAR-MELITE AND ENTERS ON HER NOVICIATE.

The tenth of January, 1765, was the welcome day of Anna Maria's admission; and her clothing was fixed for the eleventh of the following March, the Vigil of the auspicious anniversary of the canonization of our holy mother, S. Teresa, which took place on the feast of S. Gregory the Great, in 1622.

At Florence, on the evening before a recep-

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tion, a most affecting and pious ceremony takes place, which I shall here describe for the gratification and edification of strangers.

The young lady, that is to receive the religious habit on the following day, invites all the other accepted aspirants to a religious life, still living out of convent, to honour her with their presence. Accompanied by matrons, they (and their number is generally considerable) go the day previous, at the appointed hour, to the convent church in which the clothing is to take place, in festive apparel, with a crucifix on their breast, the sign that they have been declared Religious. In compliment to her illustrious father, there was a concourse of almost all the Florentine nobility to honour Anna Maria. She herself at length arrived; and, having adored the Blessed Sacrament, received from the hands of the Father-provincial the holy crucifix, bearing which, gracefully pressed to her bosom, she was conducted by him to the door of the enclosure. followed in procession by all who came to attend her. Arrived at the door, Anna Maria turned round, and with a graceful, modest, and coursgeous air, thanked them all, and took leave of her father and of the world for ever. Then, received in the midst of the nuns, who were ranged on either side waiting her arrival, she was conducted to the choir, chanting in their edifying manner the TE DRUM.

The following morning she received the religious habit from the Father Provincial, in presence of the same, and a still more crowded

assemblage of the nobility: took the name of Sister Teresa Margaret Marianna: and changing her family name, as our institute requires, she added, "of the sacred heart of Jesus," to gratify the pious novice's devotion towards that divine heart. The manner in which she conducted herself during the whole of this sacred rite, which generally affects and excites to tenderness and sensible devotion even the least reflecting, I leave to the imagination of the reader. If, on every occasion, our Sister Teresa Margaret, for so we must call her in future, edified all who beheld her, by her unaffected, agreeable, sweet, and angelic modesty, by her natural expression of combined recollection and fervour, how tender and devout the impression which she must have made on the spectators. when, having laid aside the contemned and detested decorations of the world, she was clothed in that holy habit of evangelical poverty, by which she was fully initiated in the espousals, so earnestly desired, with her crucified Lord! And that good God, who had inspired her with the exalted desire of assimilating herself to him. provided her with even extraordinary means for its accomplishment. That innocent soul, copy of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, that so earnestly loved penance in the world, now called to one of the most austere institutes in the church, the observance of whose rules alone might, it would seem, sufficiently satisfy her love of interior as well as exterior mortification, was placed under a mistress who might appear formed on the

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model of the most rigid fathers of the desert, the Rev. Mother Teresa Maria of Jesus, sister to the venerable servant of God, Cardinal John Antony Guadagni, also a barefooted Carmelite, who died in the odour of sanctity.

In the office of mistress of novices, which she filled with admiration for many years, her talents. and still more her experience and piety, furnished her with no ordinary prudence, and with light to discern well, and penetrate deeply, the spirit of those committed to her care. She had always been strict and serene; but this year, which was her last in that very delicate office. deemed the most difficult in the order, God, as we may piously believe, inspired her with a still stronger disposition to train up the novices. particularly Sister Teresa Margaret, in every sort of austerity and mortification, however severe and even unusual. Observing the undeviating exactness of Margaret, which never gave an opportunity of humiliating her with very harsh reprimands, which she would have employed on the very first occasion, however trivial, and imitating exactly the fathers of the desert, the Rev. Mother took occasion to correct her for some innocent action, and sometimes for the very duties performed with the greatest exactitude, and even ordered by herself. In almost every thing she discovered faults, and found reasons to mortify her; and this she did with such severity, that the Religious who observed it felt annoyed and even distressed. They, however, were not less edified to see the humility of

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approved for the holy profession by all the nuns, without a single dissentient voice.

When first informed of it, she could scarcely believe it, so intense was the joy with which her spirit was inundated. With sentiments of the most tender and humble gratitude, she never ceased thanking God and the Religious for so signal a favour. Not to prove most ungrateful to God, who had conferred on her so great a blessing, by her altogether unmerited, she considered herself strictly bound to change her life. as she used to say; and in order to repay the nuns to the best of her power, she earnestly entreated to be allowed to serve them in the white veil as a lay-sister. This was refused her; but in all her actions she redoubled her fervour. energy, and exactness, to which she united an angelical composure and recollection, that filled with devotion all who beheld her. In the mean time, she began to reflect more profoundly on the qualities that should characterise the sacrifice of the religious profession, in order to its being accepted by God in the odour of sweetness; and well aware that to the jealous eve of the celestial spouse the victim cannot be acceptable unless entirely pure, and that he will be sole and only master of the hearts of his spouses. she began to examine, with most scrupulous diligence, all the folds of her heart, to discover if there was any thing there that could be displeasing to him. After a long and close search, she could find nothing but her love of her excellent father, of which she doubted if it were

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altogether free from every thing that was not perfectly in accordance with the spirit of charity, and the sovereign law of the Creator. She feared that her love for him was not unmixed with some little alloy of earthly affection and mere natural feeling. With her this was a suf-Scient reason to resolve, at the moment, to cut it all off at one stroke; and accordingly, having explained her intentions to her good under mistress, she put them into execution, and wrote to him as follows: "Father, I separate myself from you altogether, in order to belong entirely to Jesus. I shall write to you no more; nor shall I," added she in this letter, "even enquire about you, unless it be by command of obedience, or to renew our mutual agreement of meeting together every evening, before we retire to rest, in the sacred heart of Jesus." She challenged him to see which would love God more ardently; and, as the punishment of the loser, fixed the merit of three communions to be offered up for the winner. All this Sister Teresa Margaret wrote to her worthy parent, whom she revered as at once her corporal and spiritual father, after having warmly thanked him for all the spiritual and temporal good he had done her, and promised to pray constantly for him.

Of the manner in which she applied herself to the immediate preparation for the desired sacrifice, that is, to the spiritual exercises that precede the profession, I find no particulars recorded, except an attestation of the under mistress, Sister Anna Maria Piccolomini, already so often

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mentioned, stating that, two days previous to that on which she was to make her profession. she found her so full of fervent love of God, that she appeared as if beside herself, "so much so," says she, "that I am at a loss for words to describe it, so surprising was it." On the eve of that important day, after having made, with the greatest compunction and consolation of spirit. a general confession, she presented herself, according to custom, to ask pardon of the nuns for the faults hitherto committed, and begged of them to accompany her holocaust with their prayers, that she might be rendered acceptable to God, and might obtain that change of life which she had promised to begin. Such was the spirit of devotion, with which she uttered these few words, that it touched the hearts of all, and drew tears from their eves.

CHAPTER XI.

SOLEMN PROFESSION OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET.

At length came the 12th of March, 1766, the day destined for her solemn profession; and if, in recounting the life and virtues of this angel in human form, we have to lament her too rigid silence in reference to herself, still more do we regret that silence on the present occasion. What a source of edification would it not be, to know, minutely and accurately, what passed within the secrecy of her heart, on the night and

morning before her solemn consecration! But we must be satisfied with conjecturing from the little we know of what preceded this holy function, how she felt at the moment of its performance, and in pronouncing the important words that bound her, soul, hody, and all, in perpetual espousals with her Jesus. "At the moment of her profession," says an eye-witness, "she seemed transformed into a scraph; and so sweet was the impression which her appearance made on the sisters assembled round her, that in their admiration and emotion they could not refrain from tears." There is good reason to believe that so transported by the vehemence and sweetness of spirit, imparted to her by God in that sacred function, did that happy victim of divine love feel, that she feared she should not be able to conceal it, were she to appear in society, according to custom and the wishes of the nuns; for she begged the favour of being allowed to remain secluded all that day, and until the afternoon recreation on the following one, a request to which the prioress readily acceded, thinking it ' a pity not to leave to her entirely those first and sweetest moments of her espousals, to employ them at her ease in returning thanks to Jesus. At length she made her appearance in the recreation room of the Religious, conducted by the Mistress of Novices; and, received with the most sincere and cordial congratulations, she again edified and affected extremely all the sisters, by her expressions of acknowledgment and gratitude to God in the first place, and next,

to all and each of them, for the favour of having been admitted to the holy profession, which established her irrevocably in that sanctuary.

On the sixth of the following April, the solemnity of taking the black veil took place with the grate open, according to the constitutions of our holy mother, making this ceremony distinct from the profession, which they direct to be made in private, in the hands of the prioress, in the Chapter room, in presence of the nuns alone. The concourse of nobility was great on the occasion, and still more so that of the people; and all retired edified, not merely in an ordinary manner, as usually occurs on occasion of similar functions, but to an extraordinary degree; for, as the new spouse had something uncommon in her modesty and devotion, the impression produced on the spectators was also that of uncommon emotion-emotion which may perhaps be conceived but cannot be described. And now, at length, behold our Sister Teresa Margaret fully contented! As if she had never done any thing well, she now set herself earnestly to keep her promise of changing her life, that is, of redoubling her exactness in the service of God, her fervour in the exercise of every virtue, and, above all, of advancing in the holy love of God, which was the peculiar characteristic of that soul so pure, so innocent, and yet so devoted to the most rigid penance. Brief was the term of her earthly career; but in that short time, so perfect did she become through the divine grace. that she was proposed as an example and model

of every virtue, and gloriously entitled a copy, a sister spirit of the angelic and penitent S. Aloysius Gonzaga. To her may well be applied the eulogy of wisdom: "'Being made perfect in a short space, (she) fulfilled a long time;'* for in all things she aspired to the sublime and the perfect. To me this always seemed her constant, interior occupation; this, her hidden martyrdom:"+ and thus it was that she reached in so short a time that high degree of virtue which we now proceed to point out.

CHAPTER XII.

A MORE PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF HER VIRTUES, AND FIRST HER LIVELY FAITH AND DEEP SENSE OF RELIGION.

How faith, which is the basis and principle of every virtue, is the first to claim our admiration in the pure and innocent soul of this servant of God. That holy, insatiable curiosity, which she began to show even from infancy, to be informed

* Wisdom iv. 13.

+ These are the words of a most respectable character, Father Ildefonsus of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, in an account of her life presented to Monsig. Monteforte, then nuncio in Tuscany, to be submitted to his holiness, Clement XIV., who wished it to be drawn up, to satisfy his pious curiosity to know the virtues of the servant of God,—Monsig. Albergotti's MS. Life.

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who God is, and to learn the christian doctrine, not superficially, but profoundly and feelingly. and which far exceeded what is ordinarily found in that age, was the first germ of that holy faith infused in baptism, which began to blossom so early in Teresa Margaret. She felt the strongest attachment to her pious father, because he, more than any one else, used to satisfy her almost incessant questions on the truths of our holy religion. and instruct her not only without being wearied but with real pleasure, in the greatness of God. his claims to our love, and the happiness which he has promised to his friends. These waters of celestial doctrines, the soul of the servant of God imbibed like a sponge; she pondered and reflected thereon; and from what had been taught her, she drew matter for new inquiries. Like our holy mother, she never once was tempted against faith. but reposed in it with acquiescence so perfect and adhesive, so firm and fond, that for every truth proposed by the church she would have been ready to yield up her life, and she envied the holy martyrs who had obtained that favour.

At the same time, thoroughly convinced that faith, unless it influence and regulate the tenour of our conduct, cannot constitute the principle of spiritual life, she felt an extreme horror of every fault however light; and, in all her actions, proposed to herself no other object than the honour and glory of God, as if she felt that in this world there was no other being but God and her own soul-These, according to the doctrine of S. Thomas,*

^{* 2. 2.} q. 6. a. 1. 2.

are the principal effects of faith, a holy fear of offending God, and purity of heart in our intentions. To what a degree of clearness and sublimity God elevated the faith of this his servant, we shall see in the succeeding chapter.

But as religion, that is to say, that virtue by which we honour God, known as that supreme and all-perfect being that he is, our Lord and our Father, is the principal result of faith, we cannot pass over in silence the extraordinary degree of perfection, to which this virtue, which, according to Clement of Alexandria, surpasses all others,* was carried by S. Teresa Margaret. Her knowledge of the Divine Majesty was most profound. and this, the respect which she evinced towards whatever even remotely referred to it, fully proved. She looked with veneration not only on priests, those too who were not her superiors, but also on her sisters in religion, because the former she considered as the ministers of God, the latter as the spouses of Jesus Christ. She never would address a priest but on her knees; to her his words were as so many oracles; and she heard them with sacred dread as the word of God. Even with regard to her director, not withstanding the holy confidence, with which she communed with him on spiritual matters, her deportment was exactly the same, even up to the period of her death. In filling the office of sacristan, and

^{*} Religio cœteras virtutes superans antiquissimam et supremam causam docet colere et adorare. Lib. 2. Stromatum.



handling the sacred articles for the altar, she acted with such devotion, joy, and reverence, as to manifest clearly the spirit that animated her in the performance of these religious services. In all her actions she was diligent and punctual to an extreme; but, when they regarded things that belonged to the divine service, she exceeded even herself in the most minute accuracy. The images of the saints she venerated with all suitable devotion; and, if she found one at all neglected, she turned all her attention to restore it to veneration, and adorn it to the best of her power.

But in preparing herself to receive the sacraments, particularly that of the holy communion, the greatest and most venerable action in our most holy religion, the diligence she employed is incredible, with what compunction she confessed. with what reverence and vehement desire, with what fervent love she communicated. The sight of her alone was enough to excite and kindle the faith of others. A fact illustrative of this, which occurred in 1768, while she assisted in the sacristy. is worthy of being recorded. When brushing the communion aperture, she saw a very small particle, which she supposed to be consecrated, fly in the air and fall on the ground. It is to be observed, that the particle itself was so extremely small, the day so cloudy, the place so dark, that it was almost a miracle, considering that she was rather short-sighted, that she should have seen it, At this incident she was very much disturbed; was filled with holy horror for the irreverence.

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however involuntary, to which she saw the sacred body of Jesus Christ subjected, and ran half dead to inform the prioress, in order that she might consult for the decorum of the blessed sacrament. Father Ildefonsus, who happily was at that moment in the confessional, entered, and having with due respect taken up the particle, and purified the spot on which it rested, placed it in the tabernacle. All this, however, did not tranquillize Sister Teresa Margaret: she remained unhappy and inconsolable, and could not think of the circumstance even for a long time after, without a renewal of the pain produced by that want of respect suffered by Jesus Christ in the holy eucharist. So profoundly was she penetrated by faith, so full of religion!

CHAPTER XIII.

SPIRIT OF PRAYER OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET,—
HER RECOLLECTION AND UNION WITH GOD.

But, in truth, it is by no means surprising, that our servant of God was so disposed towards him and his worship, if we reflect on the lights and sweet impressions of grace, visited by which, from her earliest years, she was soon exalted to the highest degree of prayer, and of union with the supreme good. Not only to recite many prayers, and read devout books, were her favourite occupations almost from infancy, but to place herself

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in the presence of God, to ascend to him by means of all creatures and all events, began to be familiar to her at a very early period, as was well known even when she was a boarder in S. Apollonia's, and while she was staying with the Countess of Montanto, before her entrance into S. Teresa's. So natural had it become to her to have her thoughts always fixed on God, that, supposing what occurred to her to be common to all, she used to say, How is it possible not to have God always present, if in God we live, and move. and have our being? It is the custom in our noviciates. that in the midst of the recreation, or of any other occupation, particularly if it be very distracting, the mistress asks the novices if they are in the divine presence. The object of this evidently is to accustom them to the interior and contemplative life proper to our sacred institute, which Sister Teresa Margaret chose principally on this account. Truth always obliged her to answer in the affirmative, but seeing that all her companions could not, at all times, make the same declaration, and prostrated at the interrogatory, confessing by that act of humility that their thoughts had been distracted, she asked leave to prostrate also, in order not to be distinguished from the rest. But spite of her efforts to conceal her constant communion with her God, it betrayed itself in a thousand ways. Besides that from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, there often fell, inadvertently, from her lips, sentiments the most sublime of the greatness of God and of his infinite goodness, accompanied by certain

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changes of colour and certain movements, that clearly indicated the dispositions of her soul. She was often observed fixed motionless before some holy picture, or going through the convent so abstracted and absorbed that she observed no one passing; and it was necessary to call and stir her in order to recall her to herself. This, her almost constant recollection and interior conversation with God, did not however interfere with the course of her occupations; on the contrary, the easy punctuality and graceful readiness, with which she executed all that obedience commanded, showed clearly that she was gifted by the Most High with that grace, asked by the wise man when he said. Give me wisdom Send her out of thy holy heaven, that she may be with me and may labour with me.* The celebrated Father Ildefonsus, the favoured director of this privileged soul, a man, as appears from his numerous publications. deeply versed in every department of literature. but admirably acquainted with all mystic theology, attests in his depositions, which are to be seen in the process and are cited at length in the manuscript life by Monsig. Albergotti, that, in his opinion. Her prayer had reached that degree of union of faith, in which it is not naturally possible for such persons to live long; that, in the ordinary ways of divine providence, they are in general soon called to enjoy, in his unveiled essence, that supreme Lord, whom they so often sought to comprehend and know on this wretched earth. He proceeds to say, that

^{*} Wisdom ix. 4, 10.

this opinion he was led to form from observing that this pure soul, as if already out of the flesh, felt no desire or anxiety about anything that regarded herself or others, except inasmuch as it might have reference to charity and the glory of God, to which she lent herself with the utmost facility and case, unimpeded by the most varied and distracting occupations; and also from observing the very sublime and simple sentiments of the Divinity, which in the excess of her knowledge and love, or for the manifestation of her interior, she unfolded to him. Among the signs. by which this excellent master of spiritual life says he understood the high degree of perfect union with God, which he believed the soul of his blessed spiritual daughter to have reached, are an indescribable purity of conscience, an ever increasing horror of the slightest fault, humble resignation in accepting from God, and willingly enduring the most painful interior trials, with a strength and magnanimity, that shone forth and increased in her every day, to undertake every thing, however arduous, through love of God. The gift of such sublime contemplation and union commands our greatest veneration, but is not necessary to form a saint. It is rather the completion of the virtues already mentioned, and of those that we shall still have to record for imitation in the life of our servant of God, and which should be earnestly emulated by those who desire to reach that degree of contemplation to which she was elevated; for whilst these virtues indicate its

attainment by those who possess it, they also constitute the means of attaining it.

CHAPTER XIV.

HER SPECIAL DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRA-MENT AND TO THE PASSION AND SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE conciseness of this compendium should not prevent me from making special mention of some more particular devotions of our servant of God, especially as they are easy of imitation by all, which, if not the primary, is certainly the secondary reason, why our holy church wishes the virtues practised by the most perfect among her children, to be made familiar to the faithful.

Devotion we here take, not in the rigour of its general definition, which is a will ready to do all that relates to the service of God, but in its most ordinary acceptation, which is, a certain particular veneration and affection that one has towards some mystery of our redemption, or some saint.

Confining ourselves then in the present chapter to her devotion towards the most Holy Sacrament, the passion of Jesus Christ, and his sacred heart, from which she was most desirous to take her name in religion, I confess I find myself much embarrassed in the selection of my matter, that which I must necessarily omit, appearing to me not less interesting or instructive than what

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I shall insert. But this compendium is nothing more than a glance at the comprehensive history of the servant of God, by the golden pen of the Bishop of Arezzo, and intended for publication on a future occasion.

The character of our Sister Teresa Margaret, is that of a soul enamoured of God: the motto inscribed on her portraits is. God is charity: and it was always in her heart and on her lips. In several passages of the above-mentioned work of Monsig. Albergotti, we read of her devotion to the most Holy Trinity, and to the Holy Spirit, and observe how God, who is infinite charity, was reciprocally loved by her; but as I wish to mention some instances of her devotion to the Man-God Jesus Christ, I begin with her anxiety to correspond with the sufferings endured by him through love of us. She always cherished a grateful and affectionate recollection thereof, and drew therefrom a most efficacious incentive to hear with alacrity every cross however heavy. She used to sav: God has suffered so much for me; and surely It is my duty to suffer some little thing for him; and if weak nature sometimes seemed to her to hend beneath the burden of toil and penance, she was confounded, and reproached her weakness, saying: My Jesus did not act thus for me. Notwithstanding her study to conceal what passed in her interior, her countenance bespoke the impressions produced by continual meditation on the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ, particularly on their recurrence throughout the year. She was overloved by the sweet remembrance of his

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birth; but during Holy Week she looked pale and afflicted. Our usual salutation of Praised be Jesus Christ, was uttered by Sister Teresa Margaret with a devotional zest, and a certain natural and at the same time animated expression, that gave clearly to understand how sweet to her was that dear name. She was particularly devout to S. Paul, because he was so enamoured of it, and has repeated it so often in his Epistles. With Jesus she began her prayers; and from him she winged her flight up to the Divinity, whose brightest lights she enjoyed, and of whom were communicated to her sentiments the most sub-lime, which however reverted to the same Man-God, who is our way, our truth, and our life.

That great was her devotion to the Sacrament of the Altar, all will easily conceive; and it was really so in a manner the most tender and edifying. One of the reasons that gave her so much pleasure in being a nun, and filled her heart with joy whenever she thought of it, was that she could then say: I dwell in the same house with the Eucharistic Jesus. And well did she know how to derive advantage from so great a blessing. She visited the Blessed Sacrament as often as she could; protracted her visit, with due permission, as long as possible; and many as were the hours which she spent at the foot of the Helv Tabernacle, to her they always appeared too few. God vouchsafed to inspire her with the most profound sentiments of faith and love. "Entering the choir one day, while we had the Blessed Sacrament exposed, I happened," says an eye-wit-

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ness," to see her kneeling before the altar, so composed and recollected, that she seemed altogether absorbed in her hidden Lord; and while I gazed on her. I understood the profound knowledge that she possessed of the great God," "Her angelic composure in church," says another, "was sufficient to make those who beheld her become recollected. I saw in her handwriting, a sentiment which she kept in her diurnal: 'Truly God is in this place.' Eyes on the earth and heart with God." This may be said to have been her constant thought, for, with affectionate attention, she endeavoured to be always turned in the direction that corresponded with the church, and ever composed herself to sleep with her face turned towards it. But when, in the course of her avocations, she had occasion to pass near the Blessed Sacrament, however urgent the business, she could never dispense with at least some short adoration; and it was observed by the nuns that, at the moment, her countenance underwent a certain change, which appeared to them to indicate a renewal of faith and devotion, with signs of joy and tenderness. that edified whilst they charmed.

Her devotion to the august Sacrament of the Altar, was still more conspicuous in devoting herself to whatever was to be dedicated to the service of the Sacred Ministry of the Altar. Not only to fold up the sacred articles belonging to it, to work them, prepare them for the necessary uses of the Mass, to look for flowers at every season, and whatever else could decorate the

church, was to her the most agreeable and honourable occupation; but also to sweep the choir, and take care of the lamps, were services performed by her with such veneration and pleasure as clearly evinced that she estimated these acts of the most abject servitude as holy David did, when he declared that he preferred them to all human greatness.

But if Sister Teresa Margaret considered herself raised to a dignity more than angelic, whenever she could employ herself in acts of homage. however remote, towards the Blessed Sacrament, it would seem superfluous to dwell on the sentiments of veneration and love with which she approached to receive it. We have already said how much she desired the Holy Communion, we may say from her infancy; how, in imitation of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, she prepared for its reception, and made her thanksgiving at that early age. Advancing in years, and at the same time in piety, in proportion as the lights of God and the flame of charity increased in her soul, in the same proportion also increased her study to communicate with more profound and lively sentiments of devotion. Of her whole life we may say, that it was a continual preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion. She communicated only on the days appointed for the Community; but if by good fortune some other favourable opportunity presented itself, no one was more delighted and happy. She thanked God, the Superioress, and the Prioress, who had accorded her the favour, in language, always

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natural, it is true, but so animated, that it showed clearly how her heart rejoiced in being sacramentally united with her Lord. To her the most delightful time of the year was the Octave of Corpus Christi: during which, according to a privilege of our Order, the office of the Blessed Sacrament is daily recited: almost all the duties of the choir are performed with the Sacrament exposed; and the nuns communicate almost every day; but this loving soul endeavoured often in the day, and at all times, to make up for the privation of sacramental communion by a spiritual one, which she always made with the most lively faith, and the most tender and ardent love. This, her devotion to the Holy Eucharist, God rewarded, and at the same time stimulated, by giving her to enjoy a most delicious odour, when she approached the sisters who had communicated. She kept moving about and getting quite near them after their communion; she knew not how to tear herself from them; and even sometimes allowed her face to rest lightly on their shoulders, as if in a sweet swoon of love, observing, all smiling and joyous, that they emitted an odour of sanctity. They also received in her own person another most delicate favour, that of experiencing a most delicious taste in receiving the Holy Eucharist. She thought, at first at least, that it was a natural effect, experienced by all; and hence, as we read in the process, one morning, after having received the Holy Communion with the Community, she asked the under-mistress, with holy simplicity and innocence, "What

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was the meaning of that delicious sweetness. which she found in the consecrated particles?" At another time, she, with the same simplicity, asked her Director, "Why the sweetness of Jesus Christ was experienced in the Holy Communion sometimes in a greater, sometimes in a lesser degree?" When interrogated as to the quality of that odour and this taste, she replied. that the former seemed to her like that of narcissus, called by her, as it is in Arezzo, moschettone; and as to the latter, she said that she knew not how to compare it to any thing or call it by any other name than the sweetness of Jesus Christ. By interrogating her with some dexterity, the confessor learnt, that this grace was accorded her constantly, and with increased intensity on the greater festivals.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a consequence, or rather an expansion of devotion towards Jesus Crucified and Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. "She made it consist," says her excellent Director, before mentioned, "in corresponding with the love with which the Divine Word has loved us, by loving him constantly in return. To this effect, in order to have continually in herself a memorial thereof, and an incentive thereto, she humbly requested, at her solemn clothing, to be called, 'of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,' thereby understanding, as she often told me, that she was not to live or breathe except to love him, in return, with all her strength and in all she did. Hence, besides the devout exercises prescribed to those associated

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to this devotion, she borrowed others from other books on the subject, consisting almost exclusively of the most sublime acts of correspondence, and of homage to the boundless charity, which the Divine Word has evinced to the human race, in all that he has done for our redemption and salvation."

CHAPTER XV.

HER DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND HER OTHER HOLY ADVOCATES.

IMPOSSIBLE to love God to love Jesus the Man-God, Son of the Blessed Virgin, and not feel devotion towards that most privileged Creature: who, in her divine maternity, was never preceded, never followed by an equal, " quæ nec similem primam visa est nec habere sequentem;" and who, as our advocate and mother, loves us tenderly, protects us, and obtains for us every bless-The devotion of Sister Teresa Margaret towards her, was, it is true, evidenced by many acts of exterior homage, by prayers, venerations, novenas, not without severe penances; but it consisted principally in studying to imitate her virtues. She revered her as the Mother of God: loved her tenderly as if she were her own mother; next to Jesus Christ, placed all her confidence in her; and hence, in all her prayers to the throne of God, used always to interpose her mediation. She would have wished to insinuate

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it into the hearts of all: and when, without at all departing from her humble deportment in concealing whatever regarded her interior, and of submission to all, she happened to speak on the subject, she did so with the most profound sentiments of veneration, and with the most lively expressions of gratitude; by her own experience rendering a glorious testimony to the beneficence of this sweetest of mothers, whose delight it is to make her devout children happy. The devotion of her good Religious sisters towards our Blessed Mother, the most Holy Virgin, was, in consequence, wonderfully increased; of whom, we Carmelites, glory in being, in a spccial manner, children; a circumstance which endeared still more to our servant of God, the Order and the Convent in which she lived.

Amongst the many devout practices with which, as we have said, she venerated the B. Virgin Mary, one deserves to be recorded. It was proposed to her by her pious Director, Father Ildefonsus, and often repeated to her during the day, and it spread rapidly not only through Florence, but throughout Italy, under the title given to it after her precious death, by the popular voice, of Devotion and Veneration of Sister Teresa Margaret, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Blessed Virgin." To any one reciting it, Monsig. Incontri, the then Archbishop of Florence, and many other Bishops of Tuscany, granted an indulgence of forty days. It is as follows:

"I revere thee a thousand times, O true Mother of my Lord Jesus Christ. Hail Mary, &c." "I revere thee, O Sovereign Queen of Angels, and Empress of the Universe. Hail Mary, &c."

"I revere and reverence thee, O most sweet Virgin Mary, most worthy Mother of my only Redeemer. Hail Mary, &c."

After the Queen of Angels, these blessed spirits themselves were the objects of her veneration. The three principal archangels, whose names are revealed in Scripture, S. Michael. S. Gabriel, and S. Raphael, were regarded by her as her special advocates; but she cherished a more familiar confidence in her Angel-Guardian. and, in all her wants, had recourse to him as she would have had to a brother. Her father states, that he was informed by a certain pious person whom he permitted to converse with his daughter, when she lived with him at Arezzo, that the servant of God had confided to her, in holy simplicity, the fact that, when a child, being alone and shut up in her chamber, there appeared to her two youths of singular beauty; and that, after having uttered a few words of extraordinary consolation, they disappeared, leaving her full of joy and spiritual delight. That they were angels, we may piously believe. This circumstance she never mentioned to her Director; but from some expressions that dropt from her, he could infer that, in her childhood, she had received from these blessed citizens of heaven, some singular favour, and a promise of assisting her with particular care and love.

Amongst the Saints, S. Joseph held the first place with her. Him, we barefooted Carmelites,



invoke under the title of our holy father; assigned us as such by our glorious Foundress. To her the Faithful owe the propagation of increased devotion towards this great Saint, who is entitled to all our homage, on account of the share which he had in all the great events of our redemption. The veneration and tender devotion of Sister Teresa Margaret were next shared by our holy mother, S. Teresa, and the holy father, S. John of the Cross. These great Saints she honoured principally by studying their writings, in order to learn and put into practice their instructions. The works of S. Teresa she read very often, and on her knees, and so attentively, that Monsig. Albergotti has no hesitation in affirming, that she had them almost by heart. The very person of our holy mother seemed always before her eyes. looking on whom with filial fear and respect, she felt prompted to comply, with the greatest diligence and perfection, with every particular of the regular observance prescribed by her in her rules. Besides these, she had, as advocates, S. Aloysius Gonzaga, and many other Saints, whose names would form a long catalogue. To the Feast of each she premised a devotion of nine. seven, or three days, accompanied with severe penances and mortifications; and to each she paid the daily tribute of her particular homage and prayers.

It excites our admiration when we learn, that all these external practices of devotion did not at all create spiritual dryness or embarrassment; and that to so many vocal prayers she knew how

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to unite deep recollection and profound contemplation.

CHAPTER XVI.

HER GREAT CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

THE knowledge of God inspires veneration towards him, and at the same time confidence in his infinite goodness, trusting in which the just soul hopes everything that is not contrary to the divine glory, which is its primary and paramount, and to its own sanctification, which is its secondary. consideration. How admirable and amiable does not Sister Teresa Margaret appear, when we contemplate her in her great confidence in the goodness of God! She frequently called him by the sweet name of Father; and more tenderly still by that of her good Papa, full of love and goodness; because in these names she found her extreme misery consoled, her unworthiness encouraged, to approach a God so great, so just, so tremendous! In those simple words used by her, we observe a sublime union of holy fear, humility, and tenderest confidence.

She sometimes experienced a sense of diffidence as to her eternal salvation, and said to her Director: "Father, shall I be saved?" and, without waiting a reply, immediately added: "Yes! I hope so, through the love and goodness of my heavenly Father, and the merits of his and my Jesus." She beheld herself disfigured by a thousand defects, even where they had no existence,

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and exaggerated them to the highest degree: but after having deplored them, she used to turn to her God and say, with the confidence of a child: "O Lord! my most merciful Father, I have acted from what I am: act thou from what thou art: and by the infinite virtue of thy omnipotence, triumph over my extreme misery." Sometimes. thinking herself alone and unobserved, she was heard to exclaim before the Blessed Sacrament. when giving relief and consolation to some very painful anguish of spirit: "Lord, I will live on confidence in thee, and I hope to be finally saved." To hear her speak of the goodness of God and of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us, was most tender and edifying. In those conversations, into which her sisters in religion, and sometimes also her Director, intentionally led her as if by chance, so ardently did she kindle into emotion, that, forgetting her usual manner of humble and unpretending silence, or rather of studied concealment of her whole interior, she burst forth into the most ardent exclamations, and gave utterance to the most fervent sentiments of the most fervent hope. Of these the following will serve as illustrations: "What a great matter that our good Jesus, now glorious at the right hand of his Father, should burden himself with our vile miseries, and deign to act even as our humble advocate! What a great matter that our good Jesus, when we are asleep, or amusing ourselves, and not at all thinking of him or of ourselves, should continue to pray for us to his Eternal Father!"

Full of such beautiful sentiments, it was impossible that she should be disturbed by any accident or peril whatever, in which she might find herself; and hence she was endowed with a special gift of consoling and re-assuring others under fear or anguish of any sort. cases she used to say: Recommend yourselves to God, and rely upon it that he will console you, if you put your trust in him. What is there to fear! If God has promised to hear us whenever we have recourse to him, have confidence. He is with us, and wishes us every good. Impossible that he should abandon us. Of this, her grace in re-assuring the timid, not a few of her religious sisters availed themselves; but its influence was particularly experienced by Sister Teresa Adelaide of Verazzano, who, infirm and almost decrepit, suffered very much from the fear of approaching death. of which she felt an extreme and innate horror. augmented by strong temptations to diffidence. All observed that Sister Teresa Margaret transfused into her, if we may so speak, so much of her own confidence and total reliance on God. that she no longer betrayed that pusillanimous spirit, and not only disposed herself to meet death with tranquillity, but succeeded so far as even to desire it with earnestness.

The confidence of his servant our good God rewarded, by accepting her prayers and granting her requests. Her director attests, and his attestation her father confirms as far as regards himself, that never did they recommend anything, particularly of a spiritual nature, to the prayers of [Sister Teresa Margaret, that they did not find sooner or later brought to the desired result. The moment she was told to ask some favour of God, she did so with simplicity and nature, generally making use of these words of the Psalmist, "Lord, all my desire is before thee;" and she herself was astonished at the infinite goodness of God, particularly as even in small matters she experienced the effects of this momentary prayer: and this was one of the things, which the servant of God used to tell without the least reserve, thinking it common to all, and nothing at all particular in her, thus exalting the infinite condescension and mercy of God, ever present to our wants, be they little or great.

We shall conclude this chapter with two other maxims of our sister Teresa Margaret, highly useful in themselves, as well as most just and evangelical, by which she teaches us how our confidence in God should never be weak or vacillating, when the fear of not being heard alarms us, or the contrary of what we desired and asked takes place. She used to say under uncertainties: Let us be quiet; however it may turn out, it will always turn out well for us, for God always disposes things as is best for us; and when some favour, for which much prayers had been offered, was not granted, she used to say: Let us leave it to God. Blessed for ever be our good God, who thus does all for our good. It is a sign that it is better for us. Woe to us, were he to grant us everything that we ask humanly. What beautiful truths! How happy should we not be, were we all to adopt

98 PENANCE, MORTIFICATION, AND PATIENCE OF

them as the rule of accepting every occurrence of our lives!

CHAPTER XVII.

PENANCE, MORTIFICATION, AND PATIENCE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD.

THE exalted idea, which Sister Teresa had of the goodness of God, must have produced in her, by a natural course and coherence of grace, extreme regret for every offence that she might think she had offered to the Divine Majesty. The extreme sorrow with which she confessed and exaggerated her slightest imperfections, for the most part ideal-the bitterness with which she continued long to weep over them, produced tenderness and confusion in those who had the advantage of hearing her confessions. To offend God was with her, as in reality it ought to be with all, the greatest, nay, the only evil. But to this principal part of penance we shall return. when we come to speak of her love of God. At present we shall advert to her corporal austerities, which enter into external penance, and are the fruit and the exuberance rather of that of the heart, and of the holy hatred of self, which grows in the heart of the just, and increases there in proportion to the holy love of God. This innocent young virgin punished her immaculate body, every day, with every sort of instrument of penance allowed her by obedience; or

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rather, the whole life of this innocent soul was a continual exercise of mortification, of suffering, of penance. Beautiful union, which confirms the character we have already given her, of copy, and what is sweeter still, of sister, of S. Aloysius Gonzaga—wonderful alike in innocence and penance!

The institute of the barefooted Carmelites is one of the most austere in the Church. To observe with exactness all its laws, is certainly to lead a life more than ordinarily rigid and penitential; but compared with all that our servant of God, insatiable in her desire of self-mortification, added to it, all the austerity of the Carmelite reform disappears, and is reduced almost to nothing.

This angel began to mortify herself almost from infancy, rejecting the more delicate viands. In Apollonia's she already made use of instruments of penance and the discipline; but as she grew up, and more particularly after she entered the convent, she devoted herself with all fervour, and with the most studious industry, to discover means of mortifying herself in every way. The necessity of eating and sleeping was to her a real cross; and if, through resignation to the will of God and obedience, she submitted to these natural wants, she knew not only how to deprive herself of all natural pleasure in them, but to render their indulgence a torment.

In the first place, she never rose from table with her appetite satisfied; and however tired and thirsty, during even the intense heat of

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summer, she never would take even a drop of water, if not obliged to it by obedience, and she then made use of water that was not fresh, and in such quantity as were merely sufficient to satisfy obedience, not thirst. She frequently fasted on bread and water; and asked permission to do so with such grace and efficacy, that it was almost impossible to refuse her. But the food which she was obliged to take in order to support life, she not only rendered insipid by dexterously pouring cold water over it, but also made bitter and disgusting, by sprinkling it with ashes and powdered wormwood.

The dress of the Teresian nuns is very penitential, and, it may be said, tormenting, owing, in winter, to its coarseness, which prevents it from adapting itself well to the person, or protecting it from the cold, and, in summer, to its texture, being all woollen even to the inner tunic, although the latter is somewhat less coarse. The sandals, too, are extremely painful, being made of different plaits of coarse hemp stitched together, and forming an uneven and, as it were, furrowed sole, on which the foot presses with the whole weight of the body. All suffer from them, particularly at the commencement: but our servant of God, who was of delicate frame and extremely elegant form, suffered more than many others, in consequence of the great perspiration of her feet, which, confined constantly within the rough hose and the sandals, became quite broiled, swollen, and even cracked and opened in many places, with a degree of pain

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that may be well conceived, particularly if we take into consideration her constant active employments, many of which were attended with considerable fatigue to so delicate a young lady, burdened as she was with the heavy religious habit. This the nuns discovered from the extraordinary manner in which her sandals were worn out and wasted. She, however, found another mode of tormenting her feet, which was to put under her soles cherry-stones, or some such other hard substance, that increased the pain of walking. She made frequent use of this penance, particularly on recreation days, when she foresaw that she should have to walk in the garden with the sisters. The pebbles that chanced to get into her sandals, and often remained a considerable time fixed in the damp soles, she never removed. As she suffered extremely from heat, she perspired copiously, and was almost continually bathed in this annoyance, which she never removed, but always allowed to dry of itself, or if reminded to dry it, she made use of the woollen handkerchief for this purpose also, which served rather to increase the inconvenience than diminish the pain. For such purposes a linen handkerchief is allowed; but even this comfort, however small, she never would enjoy. In winter, during which she suffered extremely from cold, of which she was as sensible as of heat, she was also greatly annoved by chilblains, which pained her hands so much. that they swelled and even burst; yet she not only took no care of them, but made them worse,

rubbing them with the woollen handkerchief, washing them in cold water, and even letting burning wax drop on them to cover the cracked parts. But what completed the acuteness of her pain, is the fact, that almost every evening she said some prayers, kneeling on these split and suffering!hands: blood gushed from them; and there are some leaves of her office book to be seen, marked with blood, where she held it open.

Her love of God suggested to her most ingenious modes of afflicting herself, at all times and in all things. She never drove away the flies and gnats; never got rid of those insects that annoy so much in summer; and thought it an irreverence to the Creator to kill or even remove them, delighted that, according to the will of the Creator, these creatures should satisfy themselves on her person. She took every care that her cell should be extremely hot in summer, and equally cold in winter, shutting or opening the window and door contrary to what is usually done. To overcome sleep, she used to go to rest with her head upon a stone, sometimes kneeling and supported against it, until, on account of the serious danger to her health from this mortification, it was prohibited her. keep herself fully awake at matins, which, at all seasons of the year, is recited by Teresian nuns at nine o'clock, she attached to her ears little indented iron pincers, that clasped them so tightly as soon to enter the flesh and cause very sensible pain, unknown, however, to all, because

that tormenting little instrument was concealed under her wimple.

Sharp little chains round her waist or other parts of the body for several hours, often for half the day-discipline administered repeatedly. even on the same day, were to her so many trifling penances, although administered with severity the most austere. She had also a cross nearly a foot long, armed with sharp iron points. which she wished to wear close to her bare breast every day for several hours, and for the entire day during certain novenas or vigils of more solemn festivals-a practice which, under certain conditions, was allowed her for some time, but subsequently altogether prohibited. In standing, sitting, kneeling, her ingenious love taught her modes of afflicting and tormenting herself: but to her all seemed always very little towards the resolution to which by divine inspiration she bound herself, "of never neglecting any opportunity that offered of suffering, and of suffering as much as possible in silence between herself and God." This is one of her principal maxims. recorded in the process by her director, who says of her, that most kind and compassionate to all others, she was holily cruel to herself. Another similar maxim of hers is also recorded by Father Ildefonsus, which is, "Suffer, and be silent; be silent, and suffer for Jesus." Of this she herself afforded an admirable illustration during her illness, of which we have spoken, and in her interior conflicts, which as far exceed corporal sufferings in acuteness and intensity, as

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the soul excels the body in nobleness, delicacy. and sensibility. I shall here give only one instance, certainly one of severest suffering, which is that dejection of mind, with which the Lord visited her towards the close of her days. It consisted in a certain obscurity, caused by the bright effulgence with which God illumined her soul to know him; but which, unaccompanied by a corresponding unction and sweetness, kept her spirit in a state of utter darkness and dejection. To explain the matter more clearly, her case may be compared to that of one, who, in an open country all illumined by a meridian sun. easily finds his vision dimmed by excess of light; but with this great difference, that to her the obscurity, accompanied as it was with a wearisome aridity and as it were stupor, appeared to arise from her abandonment by her God. To her this was a most painful trial: " Da amantem et sentit quod dico"-"Give me a soul that loves, and she understands what I say:" but of this we shall return to speak more at large.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET.

THE first and most necessary penance and mortification, no doubt, is that which Jesus Christ has very often made the subject of his heavenly instructions, and of which he has

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vouchsafed to propose himself as a model—that is, humility and meekness. Rich in her profound knowledge of God. Sister Teresa Margaret' could not but view herself under the most lovely aspect; and seeming to hear the sweet voice of her Jesus continually echo in her ears: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart;" she could not but desire and rejoice in humiliations.

So mean was the idea which she entertained of herself, that she was astonished, not only at the infinite goodness of God, that preserved her in existence, but also at the charity of the nuns. that suffered her to live amongst them. "Rely upon it, father," she said one day to her Director, "that these nuns are all real saints and angels......They make me tremble, because I see myself so unlike them, and so far distanced by their example. I assure you, I am absolutely unworthy to lie under their feet to be trodden on by them I look upon myself as a great trial of patience and virtue to all by my constant bad example, and I know not how they can tolerate me." At another time she said: "It is extraordinary, father, that all-even these poor girls" (meaning the servants)-" scarcely touch the threshold of this paradise"-(meaning as usual the convent)-" when they at once became saints; and yet I am always growing worse every day, and do nothing but give scandal and bad example to all." These are specimens of her usual manner of speaking of herself. But her humility consisted not in words alone; in imita-

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tion of Jesus Christ, "she was humble of heart." To mortify her, it was enough to manifest esteem for her, or praise something done by her. Even the slightest attentions that politeness or charity suggested towards all, were to her too great demonstrations of esteem, ill-placed and thrown-away attentions, that covered her with shame, and even caused her to shed tears of confusion and displeasure. At the solemn clothing of Sister Teresa Mary Ricasoli, of the Holy Conception, in October, 1765, the Grandduchess Maria Louisa honoured the function with her presence, and entered the convent with some of her ladies in waiting. The angelic countenance of Sister Teresa Margaret struck them, and they approached her with demonstrations of esteem, and of a certain particular veneration towards her, asking her some questions for the pleasure of enjoying a few moments of her edifying conversation. The servant of God coloured, and was so much confounded, that, with eves fixed on the ground and at a loss for words to reply, she, with some very polite gestures and marks of respect, withdrew as quickly as possible from their presence, and hid herself behind all the other Religious, in order to escape all further observation. Gifted by God with an excellent understanding, she comprehended everything that passed extremely well: and vet she used to pretend not to understand the conversation, and thus, assuming the appearance of being extremely simple and almost stupid,

Mother Anna Maria amused herself by sometimes calling her "simpleton."

All this, however, is not the highest degree of holy humility, nor its entire character, nor most secure practice. Many know how to speak with humility, few to bear humiliations, fewer still to love them: but the truly perfect alone arrive at desiring them, and finding in them their consolation; and all this we have to admire in our servant of God.

That rigid Mother Teresa Maria, who had been her mistress in the noviciate, reproved her often, and always with asperity, for every the most trifling imperfection, and often charged her with faults, of which she never even dreamt. Amongst the instructions of our holy mother we find the following: "When reprehended for any thing, receive the reprehension with interior and exterior humility, and pray to God for those who reprehend thee," Hence it is an universal custom throughout the order, not to defend oneself when found fault with even wrongfully, except in cases in which it is otherwise necessary to justify oneself. When reprimanded and reproved. Teresa Margaret prostrated, with her face to the ground, confessing by that act of humiliation that she was guilty; but this she did in the manner, in which saints do differently from others what is done by all. Not to speak of the peace and satisfaction that glowed in her heart, you saw her countenance brighten with joy: and to the person that reproved her she used to say: "May our Lord reward your cha-

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rity;" at the same time kissing her scapular, as we all do on such occasions, but in a manner that gave extraordinary edification to, and produced tender compunction in, all who saw her. Whatever the mistress in the oratory of the noviciate. or the prioress in the chapter-room, said in general terms of defects, imperfections, or faults, was all said for her, because she was the only defective and faulty person in the whole community. She went so far as to beg and implore even the lay sisters, by the love they bore to Jesus Christ, to admonish her of the faults they might observe in her conduct; and on one occasion, when rudely reprehended by a secular servant maid, she bore the insult in a manner to do honour to her character of spouse of Jesus Christ.

As the basis of that strength accorded her in the order of grace, and which appeared in the whole tenor of her life, sustained as it was in the continual exercise of the most difficult virtues. the Author of nature had given her an ardent, lively, and fiery temperament; but her extreme natural irritability was bridled by meekness, and this with a mastery so complete, so peaceful, that she remained tranquil and unmoved under every trial capable of exciting to anger a colder and less sensitive nature. Sister Teresa Margaret was never known to betray even the slightest symptom of anger during her whole life, not even when, by order of the mistress or prioress, she was tried, by way of probation, in a variety of ways the strangest and most unexpected. Here

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we have another great feature of resemblance to S. Aloysius Gonzaga. Father John Colombino. a man of great discernment in spiritual life. writing of her to the Canon Tonci, with whom he had become acquainted on the occasion of examining her vocation, characterizes her by the name of the little lamb, and adds that she appeared inaccessible to anger, and that even the greatest favour that could be conferred on her, would be to despise and illtreat her. Father Ildefonsus found, from the conferences he bad with her, that she accepted as the greatest favours whatever annoyances and illtreatment she might receive; and considered as her best benefactors those who had given her most frequent occasion to practise the meekness of Jesus Christ. All this she had full opportunity to practise soon after, to crown her short but clorious career, as we shall have to relate in the sequel.

CHAPTER XIX.

SHE DESIRES AND IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO LIVE AS A NOVICE.—HER PERFECT OBSERVANCE OF THE HOLY YOWS.

In the practice of this beauteous virtue, and of all the others of which we are next to speak, she had completed the term, during which it is usual with young novices to remain in the noviciate after profession; but Sister Teresa Margaret, considering herself still in need of the minute instructions usually given to novices, and of being disciplined in the most rigid and assiduous subjection and mortification, berged as a favour to remain in the noviciate another year, at the close of which she prayed the superioress and the father-provincial, to allow her to continue under the secret direction and obedience of the mistress of novices, Mother Anna Maria Piccolomini, who succeeded, as mistress, to the sister of Cardinal Gualagni deceased. The good servant of God used to say, she had occasion for one who, with heroic patience, would instruct her in the duties of a Religious, of which she was still ignorant, and who would keep her under severe discipline. teaching her to correct her constant defects. The fond mother failed not to second her wishes. taking frequent opportunities of reprehending and mortifying her with real hershness and severity: and had moreover the happiness to see her daily advance, with rapid strides, in the perfect practice of every virtue, particularly in her evangelical love of humiliations and contempts.

As, however, the principal virtue, in the exercise of which the religious should strive to excel, consists in the observance of the holy vows, and of all the laws of the respective institutes, it is necessary to place within view the perfection with which Sister Teresa Margaret fulfilled this sacred duty.

The holy vows, constituting as they do the principal and essential part of regular observance,

were also the objects of her most scrupulous attention.

Even in the world and from her childhood, the love of holy poverty shone conspicuous in Teresa Margaret, being satisfied with whatever was given her for use, and depriving herself of as much as she was allowed, to give to others for the relief of the poor; but as a Religious in a convent, in which perfect community of goods is observed, she expressed extreme regret to her director, when the conversation turned on holy poverty, that, although she professed this apostolical virtue, she never in the slightest degree felt it, being in want of nothing that could be necessary, but, on the contrary, abounding, as it appeared to her love of this virtue, with many superfluities. In fact, for her, any thing was too much, and she always sought the poorest things, and what others refused. Ever a little book, a common print, or the like, she scrupled retaining. She liked exceedingly to work as the poor do, in order to earn her bread with her own hands. She paid the greatest attention to whatever belonged to the community, and, through love of poverty, used to take care to gather up the smallest crumbs, or a little grain of pulse.

As to holy chastity, I have nothing to say in her regard, but what we read of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, in his life. The angelic purity with which she was adorned, was in her a gift, a privilege, not an acquired virtue; and so peaceful was her possession of it during her whole life, that she was never troubled with thought or excitement

of any sort contrary to chastity. In this respect, Teresa Margaret was unconscious of all the melancholy consequences of the sin of our first parents, and lived in human flesh like an angel, a pure spirit. All this is recorded of S. Aloysius, of whom we also read that he was at once most modest and most penitent, and witnesses depose the same of Sister Teresa Margaret. With regard to austerity of life, of that we have already said as much as could be compressed within the limits of this short compendium, and shall now proceed to speak of her modesty.

From a child in her father's house, she never allowed a maid to attend her person, in those things that she could do for herself. Her dress was always particularly modest, and when a nun. she fastened the rough habit round her neck, and never suffered it to be loosened in the least during even the greatest heats of summer, although her neck should have been still covered by the coarse linen wimple, that veils the entire face. To be obliged when ill to subject herself to the eyes and hands of the physician, in order to be bled or for the cure of the tumour on her knee, which we have already mentioned, was to her the severest suffering she had to endure, and hence her extreme care not to uncover herself more than was indispensably necessary for the operation, and even this she did with so hard a conflict, that the perspiration rolled down her face, and the tears burst from her eyes. Even with her sisters in religion she never relaxed her delicacy in the least; and to avoid being touched

by them, when under cure, she concealed from them, as much as possible, the swellings in her feet, occasioned by the sandals, and the sores on her hands, caused by the chilblains. On the very last day of her precious life, whilst agonizing with spasm produced by violent cholic, when ordered to be bled in the foot, she resumed the little strength that remained to implore with her dying accents the assistant nun, to take particular care that the operation be performed in the most modest manner possible, and without one in the convent being present except the necessary assistants. She once heard, from a girl of the world, some coarse expression uttered through simplicity or ignorance, and so great was her horror of it, that she instantly fled, and wept bitterly in secret for a considerable time. Ridiculous and jocose language always offended her very delicate innocence, which, although unacquainted with the opposite vice, by a certain impulse from God. abhorred everything that might in the least, and even remotely, tarnish the lustre of its heavenly beauty.

The face is the mirror of the soul, and hers, resplendent with beauty and grace, was encircled by a certain halo, or if you will, was overspread with a veil of modesty, that embellished it, and at the same time, inspired a sort of devout veneration, that made all look upon her as a saint. This her father has attested of her, when she was yet a child and in the world, and he adds, that even at the tenderest age, she could never bear

any one to use the least freedom, however innocent, with her.

Obedience too, in which consists the full character of the religious, as that which consecrates him to God in his noblest faculties, the will and also the understanding, to which it extends in its sublimest degree of perfection, was cultivated in a manner proportionate to its importance and dignity by our servant of God, who declared that she desired not to live but by obedience. Her parents and the nuns of S. Apollonia, admired in her a rare docility, not only with regard to every command or counsel suggested to her, but to the least intimation given her by them. All that she had heard from any one almost from her infancy. in the way of admonition or advice she recollected, and to assist her memory, but still more through veneration for obedience, she preserved it written on slips of paper; and these maxims she occasionally made the rule of her conduct. whenever an existing order from a superior did not prevent their observance. So numerous were these laws, as she used to consider them, that her prudent director, fearing lest their constant recollection adapted faithfully as they were to such a variety of circumstances, might weary her head too much and prove injurious to her, observed one day, that now that she was a nun, she might dispense with the suggestions which she received as a secular, and content herself with the observance of the laws of her institute: but Sister Teresa Margaret humbly replied, that she thought she should find it more difficult to give up than continue to practice them, adding at the same time, that whenever incompatible with any other duty of obedience, she was most willing to lose sight of them.

Following most strictly the injunction of our holy rule, she recognised in her mistresses, prioresses, confessors, and the superiors of the order. the authority of God himself, venerated as her oracles their intimations, not to say commands. and made it her study to put them into execution. Hence it was admirable and most edifying to see with what ease, order, and cheerfulness, with what reflection and recollection, she combined the discharge of her ordinary duties, the orders received at the moment from her superiors, with so many for the most part very minute rules, received in the manner already mentioned, or read in spiritual books. In her was visible the constant and vigilant assistance of extraordinary grace.

The counsels and suggestions, given her by her director, in his conferences with her, the sentiments of perfection which accidentally or studiously fell from his lips, were almost without number, but Teresa Margaret never lost even one of them; and Father Ildefonsus, with great surprise, attests in the process, that never in a single instance had he occasion to repeat the same thing to her; and that her cheerfulness and promptitude, in the execution of his injunctions, were proportioned to their contrariety to her own ideas, and this in every thing, although apparently less perfect. What was ordered at the

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moment, she looked upon as best for her. The harder and more difficult of execution was the counsel or intimation that she thought she received, the greater the joy with which she flew to fulfil it; and she sought more particularly in things arduous and difficult, to obtain the merit of obedience, a virtue by which she hoped to succeed in every thing.

And as her humility led her to recognise and respect in all so many superiors, she obeyed with equal alacrity and promptitude not only the lay sisters, but also the secular servants, should they at any time through ignorance or indiscretion abuse her kindness. It was necessary to attend to what one said, in order not to overburden her with labour or duties disproportioned to her strength, for to determine her to undertake any thing however difficult and even above her strength, it was enough that she saw in it the slightest intimation of obedience.

CHAPTER XX.

HER WONDERFUL EXACTNESS IN THE PERFECT FUL-FILMENT OF ALL THE REST OF THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE.

Besides the holy vows common to all religious orders, each institute has its own municipal code, known under the name of rule, constitutions, ordinary; and to these may also be added the customs of each particular convent. Having

pointed out the perfect obedience of our servant of God to the words that fell, even by chance, from the mouth not only of her superiors but of her equals and even her inferiors, it seems superfluous to devote a separate chapter to her observance of the most venerable ordinances of her order, which form the primary object of obedience itself: but for the greater edification of the reader, and of us Religious in particular, we shall briefly recount the rare perfection, with which Sister Teresa Margaret fulfilled this other part of the monastic duties, in every the most minute particular.

It has been already said that, under the plausible pretext of being company to a novice recently clothed, she got leave to continue in the noviciate a year more than usual, and that, being at length obliged to leave it, she continued to do in secret all that is proper to novices, under the particular direction of Mother Anna Maria, and all this, as she used to say, to learn to live as a Religious.

This, in truth, she had learnt so well from her first entrance into the monastery, that even from that moment she began to form a complete model of religious observance. She was the first in choir, and much as she might have been fatigued in the course of the day, and although, in consequence of attending the sick or of some other avocations, she should have retired to rest in the evening after the others, yet in order to be at prayer timely as usual, she anticipated the signal for the general rising. And as the discretion of

the charitable superiors might easily order her to remain some hours longer in bed, as is usual with regard to those that have undergone some extraordinary inconvenience, not to be obliged to accept this relief, she dissembled wonderfully well her toils and tiredness; and were the repose offered her, she with enchanting grace putting forward the greater want of others, used to succeed in inducing the prioress to extend the indulgence to them rather than to her, although she certainly stood more in need of it. Fearing too, not to waken in time of herself, or not to hear the clock, she used to recommend to those whose office it was to awake the others, to knock previously at her door, in order that the usual signal of the bell might not find her in bed.

At mental prayer or at the recital of the divine office, in common, she assisted with angelic composure, from which it was easy to see that her mind was altogether absorbed in the heavenly work in which she was then engaged. It is impossible to reflect without holy horror, that even when she had the tumours on her knee, she knelt on them, motionless, isolated, and without support of any sort. What must she not then have suffered?

The fast of our rule begins on the 14th of September, and ends on holy Saturday. This, our constitution has extended to all other Fridays in the year, to the vigils of all the feasts of the blessed Virgin, including that ad Nives and the Rogation days. It is not indeed so strict as the fasts of the church, allowing, as it does,

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something more for the evening collation than that allowed on vigils of precept and in Lent. This fast, however, is, through the divine mercy, observed with great exactness, and the evening refection allowed the nuns is extremely moderate. In the rigorous observance of this fast she. moreover, was remarkably strict, which must have been very painful to her, considering her youth, constitution, and laborious employments, particularly as sacristan and infirmarian. To be certain that it did not exceed the quantity fixed by the law, she begged to have her portion of bread weighed, and yet always left some of it. and also of the small quantity of herbs or fruit usually given with it. To these fasts of obligation she added a great many others of particular devotion with her, and not a few on bread and water, so that one may say, that the days on which she fasted were much more numerous than those, exempt from this painful mortification. But on this subject we already mentioned what is more extraordinary because of continual recurrence, when, in the seventeenth chapter, we spoke of her mortification and penance.

Another of the most interesting observances of the Carmelite institute, is the silence inculcated in the strongest terms by our holy rule, as a great means of preserving and increasing that interior communication with God, which, like the spirit of prayer, is characteristic of the Carmelite order, and still more particularly of the Teresian Reform. Of this she proved herself, by the most delicate exactness, a most zea-

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lous observer. She used to speak, when necessary, in the course of the day, when the law of silence is not so strict; but in the places, and at the times, in which silence is enjoined with greater rigour, the good Teresa Margaret never spoke, even when seriously ill. Whatever was indispensably necessary to be made known, she intimated by signs; and this she did with such grace, ease, and nature, that her silence was not disagreeable, nor did it render her dull, but on the contrary, gracious and edifying. The custom of mutually communicating by signs is of very ancient date in the Church, and to deride it would be to deride the most venerable recluses, a S. Bernard, a S. Romuald, and such other great and holy men, who are the ornaments or rather the models of the contemplative life. Two young ladies, who were boarders in the convent of S. Teress, undertook, through girlish whim, to make Sister Teresa Margaret speak in the refectory: but, notwithstanding all their efforts to make her laugh, or utter one word in the refectory, they could never succeed. At another time, after the brushing of the house had been intimated, signal having been given for the community to go into the parlour, to pay! a complimentary visit to a young lady accepted in the convent as a choir nun, the servant of God did not give over the act of observance in which she was engaged; and to a nun who endeavoured to induce her to go to the grate to pay the visit, she replied by a maxim well worthy of being recollected: "I can go to her at another time; but if I leave this

obligation of observance, I have no longer a means of fulfilling it."

At one time it was deemed advisable to forbid her altogether the use of books; but she never narted with the Rule of S. Albert, who is our legislator, the Constitution of our holy Mother, the Instruction of Novices, and the Discipline of the Cloister, which form the entire code of our holy institute, so profoundly venerated and so icalously guarded by her in all its parts, that she declared she thought herself bound to shed her blood, and sacrifice her life, for the observance of its most minute ordinance. In giving an account to the prioress, as she used to do every evening, of the faults which she thought she committed in the course of the day, in some point of observance, she usually got the penance, already mentioned with horror and dread, of reciting three Hail Mary's, with her hands under her knees, even when her fingers were cracked. and streaming with blood from chilblains. To render the life of this servant of God marvellous. what we have very summarily related in this chapter suffices, for by it she appears a perfect Religious, because perfectly observant of the holy laws of her institute.

CHAPTER XXI.

SHE IS APPOINTED INFIRMARIAN.—HER FERVENT CHARITY TOWARDS HER NEIGHBOUR, PARTICU-LARLY TOWARDS THE SICK.

DURING her time in the noviciate, according to the usage of the order, she was employed only in occupations that might be performed in the retirement of the cell, such as needle-work for the community, or for the sacristy of S. Paolino's. If she did anything else, it was at most to supply sometimes in the sacristy of the Convent Church, as we have already said, and also in the infirmary in certain cases of an extraordinary number of sick, as in 1767; but when she became altogether like every other professed nun. she was formally appointed to the office of infirmarian. This appointment she received not only in accordance with conventual practice with regard to young nuns, but also because her ardent charity, sweet manner, punctuality, and activity already proved, gave presage that she would fulfil its duties admirably, an anticipation which was realised even beyond the general expectation.

But not to pass over in silence her charity towards her neighbour in general, we must recollect that, even from her childhood, she had shown tender compassion for the poor, and endeavoured to relieve them, as far as it lay in

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her power, as is recorded at great length in the process.

An act of this beautiful virtue, which she was seen to perform whilst yet a secular, is very affecting. On occasion of making a visit to some nuns at the gate of the enclosure, observing some poor boys, whilst she was engaged in conversation, enter the gateway to ask alms, she darted towards them at once by an impulse of enthusiastic charity, and, with an expression of gracious affection not to be described, poured into their hands all the little money she had about her, and returned immediately to the enclosure with great ease of manner but full of joy. Her frequent fasts even on bread and water alone, which she knew how to ask and obtain with most graceful efficacy when a nun, were directed to the end, that there might remain more for the relief of the poor.

The least word of disapproval of the conduct of others, a single word of criticism, never escaped her lips; and the slightest notice she heard taken of an innocent and natural defect, no matter of whom, even of one unknown to her, was sufficient to disturb the serenity of her countenance, and cause her to retire in sorrowful silence, which bespoke the annoyance it gave her. She could never bring herself to think ill of her neighbours: she defended every one as well as she could, and willingly took upon herself the faults of others. She was as much afflicted to see any of the sisters mortified or ill, as she was rejoiced under her own illnesses and humiliations. One

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of the young persons on trial to become a lavsister was afflicted with a nasal affection, that emitted a most offensive smell, but she bore it near her without seeming to be aware of it, lest to notice it might prove injurious to her. She was all activity for the relief of others, of lay-sisters and even of servant-maids, was always ready to take upon herself, as far as she was permitted. (without the full permission of her superiors she would not have raised a finger) the heaviest and meanest labours, and to render herself in a word all to all with a spirit that never tired, although she was of so delicate a constitution and of such limited strength. If she learnt that any of the sisters was labouring under pain of mind or body. Sister Teresa Margaret was all anxiety until she saw her find relief. The Almighty had gifted her with a surprising talent for consoling the afflicted; so courteous, so sweet-tempered and insinuating was she, that one could not conceal from her even the most secret affliction: and she, with equal suavity and efficiency, knew how to adapt to the case the most judicious reflections, which, insinuated into the heart of the afflicted person from the unction that accompanied them, restored her to her former peace of mind, with the addition of a certain spiritual zest, if we may so call it, which was most refreshing.

But in the office of infirmarian, which is altogether one of charity, the heart of Sister Teresa appeared in its most beautiful light. The first that experienced its influence, was the Rev. Mother Teresa Maria of Jesus, her mistress. who, stricken in years with their attendant ills, and requiring almost constant assistance, availed herself of her services even more than was necessary, making her repeat with her for her accommodation the divine office, accompany her in all her many private prayers, endeavouring, in fact, to tire her patience in order to sound the depth of her virtue; but no matter how much she endeavoured to annoy and fatigue her, no matter how much she returned evil for good. painfully humiliating and harshly reprehending her, and this with a severity proportioned to the punctuality and diligence with which she served her, she found her always the same, always tranquil, and always more affectionate towards her.

The servant of God conducted herself in the same manner towards the Rev. Mother Magdalen of Jesus, who was afflicted with disgusting sores, and who, in the discharge it may be said of her duty, having been prioress, exercised her continually in mortification, which was so dear to her heart. This good mother was of a sweet and benignant nature, and was most sensibly touched by the diligent and affectionate attentions of the infirmarian, who attended her with a love and respect that clearly showed, that she recognized in her Jesus Christ; yet offering violence to her own feelings, as she subsequently attested, she almost, with tears in her eves. caused by the tenderness of her edification, scolded her and appeared dissatisfied with her as annoying and troublesome. But from this very circumstance, the constancy of the invincible charity of the servant of God derived greater strength to employ herself more actively in attending her, and this with such sincerity of soul and true enthusiasm of love, that a few hours before her death, whilst writhing in mortal agony from inflammation, she evinced the greatest anxiety to suggest that they should not forget to provide a certain herb, that was necessary for the cure of the aged ex-prioress. All present were affected and edified, but still more so on hearing from the sick mother the harsh treatment, with which she had continually exercised her, to try her unfailing charity.

In 1767, a violent influenza attacked the convent, and kept no less than ten nuns all sick for a long time. It was on this occasion that Sister Teresa Margaret, thinking it a favourable opportunity to gratify her charitable heart, earnestly requested permission to assist the infirmarians in serving the sick. She filled the situation admirably well, and with such dexterity, grace, ease, and satisfaction to the nuns themselves, that they were astonished. She seemed to multiply herself, being found ready to attend to each whenever she was wanted; and one would imagine that she read their hearts to understand and anticipate their wishes. Her appearance alone before them, with her cheerful kindliness. delighted them; she animated and edified them by her very natural, devout, and recollected manner in all her movements, so much so that

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they almost considered themselves fortunate in being ill, on account of the pleasure and spiritual advantage, which they derived from her example. It is worthy of remark that, in the midst of all these occupations, she was not only never absent from any of the numerous daily acts of the common observance, particularly of choir. but that, without being distracted from the internal communion of the heart with God, she performed so many external works with the most accurate diligence and attention. was extremely quick and diligent, but without the least unbecoming hurry: such was her compassionate and benignant kindness, combined with a composed modesty, reverence, and respect towards the sick, that she really seemed an angel in human form: and, as some of the nuns expressed themselves, it appeared as if she could scarcely have assisted in a sweeter or more recollected manner before the Blessed Sacrament." No one, I think, will be displeased with the length of this chapter, presenting as it does such beautiful effects of divine grace in a young person scarcely twenty years old. We shall therefore add a little more to its length.

Not content with the two infirm aged nuns, the care of whom she had taken upon herself, the insatiable charity of Sister Teresa Margaret begged and obtained the following year, 1768, to be allowed to serve also another, Rev. Teresa Victoria, of the family of Malaspina, nearly eighty years old, and so crippled in her right side and leg, that she could not walk without support, nor

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go to bed of herself, having occasion, in a word, for almost constant assistance. This our servant of God afforded her so fully and exactly, even up to the eve of her happy passage, that she seemed to have no other occupation but to attend to her alone, although she indeed had many others, the duties of each of which she discharged with the same care, exactness, promptitude, composure, sweetness, and ease of manner. The good old Religious never ceased recounting the patient, cheerful, diligent, and devout manner, in which she had been attended by her during the whole of that time.

But when, in 1769, she was regularly made infirmarian, not however the principal but the subordinate, I mean the second one, then it was that, spreading all the sails of her charity, she proved how much this queen of virtues can do in a soul in which it reigns. To the care of the infirmarian are confided not only the sick but also all the healthy nuns, inasmuch as it is hers to provide the latter also, who never ask anything of themselves, with those comforts, of which they stand in need under so many little inconveniences, to which females more particularly are subject, and which, through love of holy mortification, nuns ordinarily strive to conceal. She used to observe the countenances of all, see if they ate, divine every disinclination of each, and provide for all with the solicitude of a true mother.

She used to pray for her dear patients, and offer herself to God in their places to bear the

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sufferings which they endured from the maladies that afflicted them. She was most exact in observing all the instructions of the physician; but her anxiety for whatever regarded their souls was most intense. Besides most carefully providing them, in due time, the assistance of the ministers of religion and the holy sacraments, as the case might require, she herself consoled and animated them with wonderful grace, that might be called angelic rather than human. It appeared as if she penetrated into their souls, for "the things that she used to say without study, and, as it were, by chance, sunk into the very depths of their souls, and, as many of them often related with extraordinary tenderness and compunction, touched most sensibly their actual and greatest want." That, in order. to be ready for constant attendance on the sick. she should have forgotten her rest and food. which she took in a hurry, out of time, and with interruptions, may well be imagined; but that so devout a soul should also quit her exercises of piety, those too that used to be the dearest and most necessary to her, no one would suppose, who is not in the number of the few that thoroughly understand true devotion. Sister Teresa Margaret used to deprive herself of every spiritual consolation of retreat, solitude, conferences with her director, even under the most painful spiritual trials; and knew how to pass, without a moment's interval, from the sick bed to the holy communion. Astonished at this circumstance, some one asked her if she had no scruple in

making no special preparation for the holy table; and she humbly answered in the negative, believing that even that duty was a good preparation for receiving that divine Sacrament.

CHAPTER XXII.

HER SINGULAR CHARITY AND PATIENCE IN.

"CHARITY is patient," says S. Paul; and this patience of charity or charity of patience, as we may choose to call it, was practised by our servant of God, in a manner so sublime and heroic that it deserves most distinct notice in a chapter apart.

So far back as the year 1768, she had confided to her care a poor nun, who, by one of those decrees of God that remain hidden in the abysses of his inscrutable Providence, had entirely lost her reason and often became furious. This unhappy creature, who had been an excellent religious, in consequence of her madness had become most voracious, and longed for the very things that the physicians forbade as injurious. Changeable and fickle in every thing, as is generally the case with the insane, she also frequently threw away, in a fury, the very thing, which a moment before she wished for with mad passion. prudent superioress had ordered the servant of God, with the most exact precision, to give her what the physicians, consulting better for her

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health and sustenance, had recommended, and forbade the least liberty to exceed the given rule. Not finding the food that she had expressed a wish for, the maniac turned all her fury against the infirmarian. To this she found an additional incentive in the compliances of the principal infirmarian, who was of a remarkably sweet and condescending disposition, and who used to humour her in all her humours. looking more, as she used to say, to the necessity of keeping her quiet than to her health or the orders of the superioress. This she did through excessive charity, but, to say the truth, charity not well understood; and the circumstance determined the superioress subsequently to relieve her from all thought and care of the maniac, giving her altogether in care to Sister Teresa Margaret. Behold, then, the situation of our servant of God in this her new charge. The maniac furiously insisted on having what she desired; and the prioress had forbidden giving her many things, which she was in the habit of demanding. If she obeyed the superioress, the poor maniac became furious, and she brought on herself the reproaches of the first infirmarian. who, in her mistaken charity, said that she was astonished at her insensibility, and thus made her scruple being the cause of the invalid's paroxysms. If, on the contrary, she gratified the maniac, and did as her companion desired, she disobeyed the superioress. Charity, which was the strongest feeling of her heart, combatted with obedience, which we may say became her

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very soul, and was in reality the great moving principle of all her actions and even thoughts. But the prudent virgin knew well how to decide in favour of duty, not, however, without subjecting herself to many and grievous sufferings. The Almighty permitted that the unfortunate Sister Teresa Louisa (such was the maniac's name) should take a violent aversion to the servant of God, so much so that the very sight of her was enough to throw her into a rage; and the more attentive and kind she was in attending her, the more she became alienated from and provoked against her. But the hours of dinner and supper were those of her most furious attacks on the servant of God. Dissatisfied with every thing. she rained upon her in her phrensied manner the most ferocious abuse and insults, and sometimes even blows.

This last circumstance is not known for certain; but it is, however, attested by a servant girl, who happened to be present one morning, when the unhappy maniac, more than usually excited, flew at her, and beat her, or did little less than beat her. Although she might not have laid violent hands on her, on this occasion, as there was another present, she might easily have done so but too often at other times, when they were alone. Sister Teresa Margaret however remained alone with her a long time, not only at her meals, which lasted a good while interrupted by such screams and lamentations, and by so many commands which she used to give her to go all over the convent and run up

and down stairs, to look for what would please her, which she did as far as she was allowed by obedience; but she also remained with her for some time after her meals, by way of recreation. All, however, was to no purpose: indeed, it seemed to have the effect of irritating her more than ever. But not withstanding all the ill-treatment, insults, and injuries, heaped by the miserable maniac on the good infirmarian, as if in return for her extreme attention to her, she never, in the least, relaxed her diligence in attending her, her kindliness in rendering her every assistance in her power; and after listening with imperturbable patience to her bitterest reproaches, and having perhaps felt the weight of her hands, she, with the sweetest tranquillity and composure, continued to treat her with the same tender benevolence as before, and with still greater, could she but know how to do so.

In the next place, she not only never complained nor begged the superioress to release her from so annoying an office, and one too not exempt from serious danger, but, on the contrary, whenever any one mentioned in her presence the extravagauce of the maniac, and the trouble she was to the community, she began to excuse and defend her so constantly and zealously, that she was commonly styled in the convent the defendress of Sister Teresa Louisa. One of the nuns, pitying her more perhaps than the rest, although it was impossible that all, in fact, should not pity her, at least in the multiplied fatigues and annoyances, which so trying an office brought

her, affectionately suggested to her to endeavour to be relieved from it; but this advice the servant of God rejected with wonderful resoluteness, and replied, that, being an office assigned her by obedience, she should never seek to be released from it. On the contrary, having been at one time removed from it, she humbly begged to be restored, and accepted, as a signal favour, permission to be allowed to resume it. The circumstances were these. When, in 1768, the servant of God, merely to assist Mother Teresa Magdalen of S. Francis of Sales, was charged with, or rather voluntarily undertook, with the leave of the superioress, the greater and more arduous labours necessary to be gone through in serving this poor maniac, who was specially given in care to that Religious, it happened, one day, that, while Sister Teresa Margaret was in the cell of the invalid, on occasion of having waited on her at dinner, a servant maid, observing the door open, closed it, as if through inadvertence, with a chain, or something else that rendered it impossible to open it from within. In the mean time was given the signal for the after dinner repose: Sister Teresa Margaret could not leave the cell without calling, and making known the mistake made by the girl; and, either through respect for that time of more strict silence, or rather, not to expose the girl to a scolding, remained shut up with the maniac until the middle of Vespers. It pleased God that her conduct in this instance should, or a principle of charity, be found fault with; that is

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to say, the nuns were horror-struck at the danger, to which Sister Teresa Margaret had been exposed, shut up, as she was, alone for such a length of time with the maniac, who, as all knew, was then particularly furious against her; and they reproved her for her rashness and improvedence.

The head infirmarian was more annoyed by the circumstance than the others, thinking of the vexation she would have had, if her young companion, while engaged in assisting and relieving her, had received some injury from the unhappy maniac; and threatened her with not accepting any longer her charitable co-operation. servant of God did not seek to justify her conduct, nor did she mention the circumstance as it occurred, and as it was subsequently known through another channel; but received all the reproofs with humility. In the evening, however, about supper time, she again went to ask pardon of Sister Teresa Magdalen with the aweetest and most endearing submission, begging her, with tears in her eyes, to allow her to continue to serve the deranged sister, and assist her, as before, in the most laborious and lowly offices about her. Anxious to continue in an employment of this sort, she exculpated as much as possible the violence of the insane nun, and extenuated, in the best manner she could, her maniac transports, whence, as we have before observed, she was styled, in the convent, the defendress of Sister Teresa Louisa. The first thought she had when assailed, and perhaps beaten, by

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the maniac, in presence of the servant girl, was to run to her, and beg of her not to breathe a word of what she had seen to any one.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ALMIGHTY, BY SOME SIGNS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN MIRACULOUS, IS PLEASED TO SIGNALIZE THE CHARIFY OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET.

Such heroic sufferance was, no doubt, a prodigy of unconquerable charity: prodigious, too, was the more than masculine courage, with which a young female of little more than twenty. remained tranquil and unmoved at the frequent and, one might say, continual sallies of the maniac against her; and not less so were the activity and composure, with which she hastened at every call of the sick, distributing all things with such good order and wisdom, as enabled her to be ever ready to attend to their every minutest want, even of mere comfort-nav, of pleasure, and, at the same time, never to neglect any duty of monastic observance, particularly that of attending choir. Prodigious also were her perpetual recollection and internal communion with God, in the midst of the most distracting occupations: but, besides all this, in the servant of God were observed many other things, believed superior to the order of nature, and having all the characteristics of real miracles.

It appeared that she had a clear discernment

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of the most hidden wants of her invalids, whereas it frequently occurred that, when one of them felt a desire for some assistance, she, at that moment, saw at once before her the servant of God to satisfy her wants and wishes. In 1767. when she was assistant to the infirmarians. amongst the other sick her sister Novice, Marv Teresa Ricasoli of the Holy Conception, was confined to her bed, in consequence of being subject to frequent and most violent convulsions. that created apprehensions of incipient epilepsy. The servant of God had visited her before going to choir, and had left her perfectly quiet. Soon after she felt a strong impulse, which she could resist but for a short time, to go to see her, and found her in one of her horrid paroxysms, and in extreme want of help. She accordingly assisted her until the infirmarian, who was called, arrived, and then returned to choir.

During the long illness of Sister Teresa Adelaide Verazzani, which proceeded from the languor and feebleness of old age, it was uniformly observed, that, when the good old lady called her with a very low and feeble voice, she, no matter at what distance, or how separated by intervening cells and whole corridors, that rendered it naturally impossible that she should hear her, was nevertheless with her almost in the twinkling of an eye, and offered her the desired assistance.

So deaf was the poor invalid, that, no matter in how loud a tone of voice she was addressed, she heard not a word, and could understand what was said only by means of a trumpet applied to her ear. The consequence was, that she could receive little help or pious consolation from the spiritual fathers; but Sister Teresa Margaret, who heard her as described above, spoke to her in a low tone of voice, as she did to every one else, and was heard perfectly by her. This prodigy Father Ildefonsus, already so often mentioned, had the happiness to admire in person, when, assisting the old nun on her death-bed, he witnessed the promptitude with which Teresa, Margaret, who was in another cell, ran to her, although called by the invalid in so low a voice, that he, although at the head of her bed, could scarcely hear it. He then quitted the cell, in order to leave the invalid at liberty with the infirmarian: but at the suggestion of the nuns themselves, he stopped unobserved near the door, where he was a most fortunate spectator of the manifestation of the greatness of God in his spiritual daughter. Being unable to stretch in the bed, in consequence of the oppression on her chest, the old lady begged to be lifted up on the pillows. After some moments spent in rendering her this service, in which we have to remark something little less than supernatural, considering that Sister Teresa Margaret, young and delicate as she was, wielded with the greatest case the helpless person of this languid, dying old woman as if it were a distaff, to use the expression of the nuns mentioned in the process, he with his own ears heard the dying nun thank her with the same languid voice, and add: "You have really

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placed me well; now say something to me of Jesus."

"The servant of God then began in a lower tone of voice than usual, from a reverential fear of being heard by me," says Father Ildefonsus, 46 as she might suppose that I was in the recreation room, not very distant She began to suggest to the invalid such fervent acts of faith. patience, resignation, self-oblation, but more particularly of hope and love, which she always knew the sufferer to want more than the others. and this with such emphatic and appropriate expression and feeling, that I was altogether astonished, and had to use great self-control to refrain from tears of compunction, &c. I learnt from the nuns that they always understood each other with equal and sometimes greater facility; but that with the others, as well as with the priests, the invalid was extremely deaf Hence I became more decidedly of opinion, as I now am, that, without a twofold grace of God, it certainly could not have happened, that the servant of God could, at a distance, hear the faint voice of the invalid, or that, when alone with her, she could not overcome, with the facility that I have stated, her inveterate and extreme deafness "

However anxious to consult brevity, I cannot bring myself to pass over in silence another fact, which to me appears prodigious, and is very affecting. Our servant of God was yet a novice, and with her also in her noviciate was Sister Maria Victoria, of the family of Martini, who was sub-

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ject to frequent attacks of violent toothache, that sometimes threw her into convulsions. One day in 1765, being both together at the second table in the refectory, Sister Teresa Margaret observed that her good sister novice was violently attacked with her usual pain: her sympathy was proportionate; and under the influence of enthusiastic charity, she rises from the table, draws aside the suffering novice, kisses her on that part of the cheek where the aching tooth was; and without saying a word, or doing any thing else, leaves her, and returns to her place.

Although, in the early ages of the Church, the sacred kiss of peace was in use amongst the faithful of the same sex, this custom is now, for good reasons, altogether excluded the temple, and does not exist even amongst nuns. To preserve the respect which she wishes her daughters mutually to observe towards each other, our holy mother has prohibited every act of familiarity, even the slightest touch, not only of the cheek, but also of the hands. This act of Sister Teresa Margaret was an exception, prompted by an extraordinary impulse of charity, and authenticated by God with a prodigy. The moment her virginal lips had touched the cheek of the tormented sister, the pain ceased, and what is more, never returned to trouble her.

It was the general opinion in the convent, that God had granted her a particular grace with regard to the sick, by signing them with a certain image she had of the Madonna del Buon Consig-

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lio, which she always wore, or with the oil of a lamp that burnt before another: nay, if she only touched them as it were by way of caress near the seat of the disease, they experienced certain relief, and some were instantly cured. Thus did it please the Almighty to manifest his acceptance of the tender, and at the same time, infense love of her neighbour, which he himself had lighted up in the heart of this his servant.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HER LOVE OF GOD.

Should it please Almighty God to raise Sister Teresa Margaret here below to the honour of the Saints, she will present, as her distinctive character, charity; not that we can conceive sanctity without this virtue, which is its constitutive principle, but because in her it shone more brightly, as it did, to speak comparatively, in a S. Francis of Assisi, a S. Bonaventure, a S. Teresa, her mother, also one honoured in the Church with the sweet and glorious title of seraphic.

She began almost from her infancy to love God; and we should recollect the beautiful answer she gave her spiritual father, when he asked her if she thought she had loved him when she began to have some idea of him: "Surely all do so; and how do otherwise?" was her reply; and again: "Jesus knows well, that since I was a little child I have had no ether wish than to please him, and become a Saint." This holy love, then, had gained a complete mastery over her innoceut heart at a very early age, to the exclusion of every other natural love, even that of the own father, for whom she had cherished the tenderest affection.

Having parted from him on one occasion, after a visit he had made her, the servant of God, on her way to the grate to visit the Blessed Sacrament, as was her custom, was met by another nun, who asked her if she had felt regret at parting from her father. The servant of God. sweetly smiling, showed her a strip of paper. which she kept perhaps in her Diurnal, on which was written a sentence from S. Augustine, given her by Father Giancolombino: "He loves thee too little, who loves anything with thee." being also most true, that where our treasure is, there also is our heart, that is to say, our thoughts and affections. Sister Teresa Margaret was altogether, and at all times, in God. Her constant recollection in God, although she endeavoured to conceal it, appeared even in her most ordinary actions, as at recreation, and at all other times and places, however distracting. having her thoughts always fixed on God in her occupations: "saying to me, as to the other sisters," thus deposes the Reverend Father Piccolomini, "let us do it for love of God;" a maxim which she used also gently to insinuate into the minds of the lay sisters, when finding them at their ordinary occupations, impressing on them

that they should recollect to work always for the love of God, and for no other end. For this very reason she was most diligent in the use of the devotions, which we, barefooted Carmelites, have collected together in a little book, entitled, 'The Discipline of the Cloister,' composed by the Venerable Father John of Jesus and Marv. whose valuable works, in three thick volumes in folio, were republished, a few years ago, under the care of the same Father Ildefonsus of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, the director of the servant of God so often mentioned in these pages, and always with veneration and honour. This is one of the only two or three books that she allowed herself to have in her hands towards the close of her precious life, because it supplies most devout and simple forms of prayer to be used before almost every action in secular and monastic life. to direct them to the glory of God.

She found God in everything: of him all creatures spoke to her, and praised to her his power, beauty, and goodness. When she had to go into the garden with the other nuns, she no sooner breathed its open air, than she fixed her eye on some plant or flower, or lifted it to heaven, and in holy transport conversed with herself, or with those innocent works of the hand of her God; and without being herself aware of it, gave utterance to most sweet and beautiful sentiments towards the Creator. If she got leave to sing, she first began according to rule, and in a measured and sweet voice; but soon becoming inflamed, she lost the notes, and raised her voice to such a

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pitch, that it became necessary to remind her of it, that she might not be heard outside by the people passing.

If a spiritual subject was expressly introduced in conversation, however circumspect she might be, as we have already so often said, in concealing all that passed in her interior, she became so ardently inflamed, after a few words, that, without adverting to it, she spoke divine things, which so transported the spiritual father himself with sweet admiration, that he has recorded it in his depositions. From another witness we learn that, when in private any one introduced, as a topic of conversation with her, the love of God, "she was so fired, that her countenance became quite inflamed as if crimson-coloured, then passed to a purple, and then often to a pale and almost deadly hue. On one occasion, having in one of these conversations expatiated with herself, after the three changes of colour in her countenance, she fell, almost in a swoon, on one shoulder." It has been already said that, on hearing the account of some grievous sin, she also fainted, through pain and horror at the offence of her God, whom she so loved.

Convinced, and intimately convinced, of his goodness and loveliness, it appeared to her impossible that any one could be found to offend him; but thought, on the contrary, that all loved him as much as she did, and still more; and to this her most happy mistake, we owe many manifestations of her interior flames, and of the wonderful manner, in which she combined

with interior recollection so many manual labours of so distracting a nature. In a conference with her director she said: "It appears to me that the soul and heart cannot tend but to their centre, which is God; and he, who is the beginning of all our works, aids us to work well and quickly." Thus, in fact, it occurred to her, as we have already more than once related.

When she first entered the convent, the nuns. observing in her a certain habitual abstraction as it were, thought it might perhaps arise from a slow and obtuse intellect: but they soon saw that her sweet and continual application to God absorbed her attention, but in such a manner, as we have seen above, as not to prevent her performance of every external work. So natural had interior and loving communion with God become to her, that it would have been very difficult to estrange her from it, but easy and sweet to cherish it-in a word, she lived on the holy love of God. But on this subject let us listen to herself, in a conference with her spiritual father, from whom we have it. He says that, having one day given her amongst others some insight into this life of love, she took a spiritual flight, and said heavenly things on the subject, concluding with these words: "As amongst the Divine Persons there is but one life, one love, one God, (but in God all this by essence, in the creature by participation and grace); so is it true, that amongst lovers all is common;"-that is to say, he who loves God lives the same life with him, by him, and in him. These, and so many

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other similar divine sentiments, our servant of God had learnt to perfection under an extraordinary tutelage of the Holy Ghost, who instructed her wonderfully by means of the same fire of holy love; and when it burnt in her with more than usual intensity, such sentiments escaped her lips almost without her perceiving it, from the vehemence of spirit that agitated her, and baffled her humble deportment of silence and concealment.

One Sunday after the Pentecost of 1767, these words of St. John having been read at choir in the little chapter for tierce, "God is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him," "so inflamed was she with the sentiment expressed in these words, that for some days she remained almost abstracted and out of herself, often repeating them to herself in an under tone, particularly when she thought she was unheard; and from the manner and frequency with which she uttered them, the nuns well understood that they were accompanied by an extraordinary fire of the love of God, and observed in her from that day forward a constant increase of all virtues," - the natural effect of holy love, which leads the soul to look eagerly for opportunities to please God, and conduct themselves therein with the greatest generosity and perfection. This pure soul seems to have been afraid of forgetting it, whereas, to secure its recollection, she used to note down, on little slips of paper, those passages from Scripture or the holy Fathers, which made the liveliest impres-

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sion on her mind, and which she from time to time heard or read. She was also in the habit of writing down any sentiment of more than ordinary interest, suggested to her by holy love. Of these several are still preserved as precious memorials of her charity. I shall here insert but one, written in her own blood, which is as follows: "Jesus, my dear love, I promise thee to desire to be all thine at the expense of every repugnance." It is not consolations, nor sweet transports, not sublime conceptions, nor even ecstasies and revelations, that form great saints: but labours and tribulations of every sort, which characterize and at the same time perfect true charity, when borne or rather cherished through love of God. All this we have hitherto observed in Sister Teresa Margaret; the Divine Spouse. wishing to complete her crown within the course of a very few years, transformed love itself into her torment, thus to purify her heart every day still more, and render her a martyr of holy love here below, in order to enable her to enjoy soon after the fulness of its blessed fruition in paradise.

CHAPTER XXV.

GOD PREPARES SISTER TERESA MARGARET FOR AN EARLY DEATH, PURIFYING HER WITH A VERY SEVERE MARTYRDOM OF HOLY LOVE.

THE human heart, formed as it is to love, in loving performs a most congenial act, in which it

finds all its satisfaction and contentment, its repose and quiet. It is, however, necessary that itobject be in itself all perfect, without defect of any sort, and that it be corresponded to with filelity. This those alone who love God can experience Hence there is not, there cannot be, anything sweeter or more pleasing than the love of God. Inviting all to taste it, hely David with transport exclaims: "Taste and see how sweet is the Lord:" to this bear testimony so many fortunate souls, who, the Lord having granted them some sensible perception of its sweetness, which is, says S. Augustine, a drop of the blessed torrent of Paradise, were no longer capable of controlling themselves, and exclaimed to God: "Enough, O Lord! enough!" feeling themselves languish, nay die, of sweetness and pleasure. Thus the Spouse in the Canticles: thus also S. Philip Neri, our holy mother S. Teresa, S. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi, and other similar seraphic souls. But this same love, differently treated by the Master-hand of God, is changed into a tormentor, as was experienced on another occasion by the same sacred Spouse, who then declared that it is hard as death, nay as hell itself.

In the ordinary ways of Providence, when the Almighty wishes to give, if we may so speak, the last touches of perfection to a soul, that is, to purify her as much as possible in this life, according to the measure fixed by his eternal decrees, he not only deprives her of all sensible devotion, but withdraws even from her spiritual powers

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all the satisfaction that they should naturally enjoy in the contemplation of the Infinite Good, and in devoting themselves to his love This results from a superabundant light of pure faith, which, by its very splendour, envelopes the intellect in thickest darkness; for by imparting to it a very profound knowledge of God, faith also enables it, by the very fact of its possessing this knowledge. to know also that it forms but a very inadequate and obscure idea of the Divinity. The farther a profound scholar advances in the regions of science, the greater the number of objects which he descries, as it were, at a distance, of which he can never attain a knowledge; and his conviction of his own ignorance keeps pace with his advancement in science. So it is with the will in loving God: it loves its God in proportion to its knowledge of him, but it regrets to love him but little in proportion to his infinite claims to its love. It feels confusion at its defects, which, contrasted with the perfect sanctity of God, appear most hideous; and hence arises a sense of unworthiness, a mortal avidity so painful that by Mystics it is compared to the pains of purgatory, and to hell itself, applying to this state of spiritual purification the words of the Sacred Spouse, above quoted: "Love is strong as death; emulation is hard as hell." To enable the reader sufficiently to comprehend what we are about to relate of our servant of God, who, by this painful ordeal, was prepared for the happy death, by which her most loving Spouse was pleased so soon to

call her, this theory of spiritual life was in some measure necessary.

The portrait, which we have hitherto drawn of the spirit of Sister Teresa Margaret, presents nought but the idea of a soul tranquil in the possession of the holy love of God, and animated by a sweet fervour of charity, that enabled her to run on sweetly in the paths of perfection. natural ease and grace that shone in all her actions, that surprising activity in the works of charity, that sweet and insinuating manner of consoling others, that even or rather imperturbable spirit under all the various accidents of life, the tender aspirations to God into which she so often broke without being aware of it, all seemed to announce nought but a state of peace, in which her soul, gently wafted by the sweet breathings of the Holy Spirit, should wing its flight from the paradise, given her by singular privilege to enjoy on earth, to the Paradise of Heaven.

Different indeed was the divine dispensation in her regard. Saint Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi, called S. Aloysius a hidden martyr of holy love; and the reader will judge if even in this, his pregative, our servant of God is not assimilated to him. In the first conference which she had with Father Ildefonsus, even in his Noviciate, being bound by every principle of obedience, and for her own security, to make an exception to her secrecy, and open to him her whole heart, she confided to him the fact of her extreme desolation, finding herself as in a night of thickest darkness, in which she could conceive no idea of God,

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whom she longed so much to know. She added that she felt within her an utter dryness of spirit. in which she loved not, nor knew how to love, the Supreme Good, "What shall become of me," she asked: "shall I be saved, Father, after having contracted such heavy debts of gifts received. and with so little benefit to myself?" She, it is true, was somewhat cheered by hope, which had not altogether abandoned her; but the alleviation was not such as to afford her permanent, sensible relief, that would have lifted her out of the abyss of her own sadness. When a girl from the age of seventeen to twenty-two, she gave expression to the loftiest conceptions of the Divinity. either in casual conversation or in the superabundance of her spirit, and spoke of the Supreme Being and his attributes, in such terms as a profound and consummate Doctor of Theology could not have done without much study and reflection. Behold the darkness, which now brooded over her spirit.

She declared that she knew not how to love her God, whilst she breathed nought but zeal for his glory; and through love of him undertook labours superior to her strength, loaded herself with penances the most austere, was invincible in enduring pains and vituperations, and insatiable in her desire for them. Her thoughts were ever occupied in God; and her imperfections, for the most part apparent, not real, were in her eyes deformities of horrible ingratitude, for which she said, but too justly, that the Lord punished her with that aridity in which she found herself, and

from which she actually experienced the most sensible pain.

In this state, which is that which Mystics compare to whatever is most painful even in the next life, Sister Teresa Margaret continued to agonise. during a few short years it is true, but yet sufficiently long to entitle her to be called a martyr of love. In this brief period of time, the love of God increased in her almost momentarily from the continual aliment with which she fed it, by the almost uninterrupted application of her mind and heart to him, together with the constant practice of good works. In proportion, then, as souls in this state advance in love, in the same proportion they find themselves exposed to more acute pains; whereas knowing God better, they discover in him, if we may so speak, a more profound infinitude, which by its light thickens still more their mental darkness. Loving more ardently; desiring to love still more; and not appearing to equal in love the desire of loving, whilst at the same time they see even the very desire inferior to the loveliness of its object. which is God, they are so tortured, that their sufferings, as has been already repeatedly observed, are compared by our holy mother, Teresa, our holy father, S. John of the Cross, and other Mystics, to those of Purgatory, and in some sort to others which, engaged as we are on the exalted subject of divine love, I avoid repeating.

Here, however, let not the reader omit to reflect, that to preserve, as we mentioned more particularly a little before, an exterior so placid as did Sister: Teresan Margaret, under pains so acute that preyed on her spirit, was a prodigy of fortitude, in which we find an additional reason for calling her a hidden martyr of divine love. A moment of abstraction, a glance of the eye towards heaven, a sigh, was all that could be noticed in her as extraordinary, and that seemed capable of betraying in any way her secret. But to return to our subject:

It is natural that, under an agony so distressing. the soul should ardently desire to be free from the incumbrance of the body, aware that in heaven it shall know God as much as it shall be capable of knowing him, and will love him perfectly and with the certainty of never more offending him, or in other words, that it sees in death the last remedy for its ills. Its desire of death is therefore proportioned to the intensity of its sufferings, and they are doubly intense precisely because they are not terminated by death, for the axiom of the ancient is most true, that to live when we desire to die, is more painful than death itself. The same idea has been expressed by our holy mother in these few words: I die because I do not die. Sister Teresa Margaret too, could have repeated, and did perhaps repeat a thousand times the same sentiment in the flower of youth. Certain it is that the favour which she asked that excellent aged nun, who was deaf, and whom she attended with such charity until her death, was that in return for her assistance, she would obtain for her from Jesus an early death, in order to be enabled one

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day to love and enjoy God soon and for ever. It pleased the divine goodness to hear this prayer, poured from her enamoured heart, and to grant its fulfilment sooner even perhaps than she herself anticipated.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PRECIOUS DRATH OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET.

In the course of the twenty-second year of her age and fourth of her profession, the discerning eye of her spiritual director, Father Ildefonsus, observing her mental anguish just mentioned very considerably increase, entertained for some time apprehensions of losing Sister Teresa Margaret very soon, although still so very young, healthful, and blooming. He well knew that, in the just, severe interior trials, and a most vehement desire of going to God, are symptoms of approaching death. "I noticed in her very frequent and extremely vehement desires to be united to God, she thought of nothing else, sought nothing else," are his words in the process; and in the relation made of her, after her death, to the Supreme Pontiff, Clement XIV., he adds, "This (to be heard,) she appeared to anticipate, for during this year in particular, she evinced an especial and fervent haste in labouring in every way for God and his glory."

The good old invalid, whom she had begged to obtain of God for her the grace to die soon, had

already passed to another world, in the month of November: and we may well believe that the servant of God did not forget to ask, nor the good nun, whom we piously believe to be numbered with the saints, to have promised to solicit the favour. The month of March arrived, sacred and venerable amongst all the months in the year, for the commencement and completion of the great work of Redemption wrought therein. through the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. and the death of Jesus Christ; and it was that also in which God had decreed to gratify the wishes, which he himself had excited in the devout heart of Sister Teresa Margaret. It was ordained that she should close her earthly career by a premature and most painful death, in imitation, to a certain extent, of that of her Spouse, and for the happy completion of her crown. But its manner was such as to render her incapable of immediate previous confession, or of holy communion by way of viaticum. It is not often that Providence denies this grace to his special friends. Behold, however, the compensation, which it appears her celestial spouse wished to make her: true, he revealed not to her the secret of her impending death, but he excited her by his grace to receive the holy sacraments, on that last occasion, as fervently as she should have done had she really known it to be her last.

On the fourth of March, which in that year fell on Sunday, the servant of God presented herself to her director, and begged him to allow her to make a more minute and longer confession than

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usual, and also to receive the holy communion on the following day, as if it were to be the last day of her life. He was surprised at this unusual solicitude, particularly as he knew the servant of God was in the habit of always receiving the holy communion by way of viaticum; but this was the only reflection which the circumstance suggested to him at that moment. The nuns have deposed that "they saw her leave the confessional that day more than usually rejoiced and delighted, and with a countenance more than ordinarily cheerful, but that then, however, they paid very little attention to the circumstance."

On the following day, Monday, the fifth of March, that is, two days previous to her death, she received the holy communion with the other nnns. Of the manner in which her God was received for the last time, and by way of viaticum. by this enamoured soul, who, in these last moments, must have felt more intensely, and with more fervent and vehement desire, the impulse of the Spirit, because on the point of attaining its perfection, now that she was on the confines of eternity, we know nothing. Judging, however, from our knowledge of the profound and ardent devotion, with which she usually communicated, we may easily, although only in a general way, conjecture, how she communicated now for the last time. During the whole of that day and the Tuesday following, nothing was noticed in her. that could in the least belie her appearance of uninterrupted and vigorous health; but in the evening, about six o'clock, having left the prio-

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ress's cell, who was afflicted with sores on her legs, she passed to that of Sister Mary Teresa. who was also ill. and said to her with a very tranquil air, that she wished to communicate to her a beautiful exercise of conformity to the divine will, to be made use of in time of sickness; and read for her part of the admirable and well known work of Father Binetti, of the Society of Jesus, called "The Practice of the Holy Love of God," which she had with her. She then went down to the refectory to take the Lenten colla-There she found herself alone, as her office of Infirmarian prevented her from going there with the Community. Here it was that the Spouse knocked at her door, and that she heard his voice inviting her to the celestial nuptials.

Scarcely was she seated, when she was suddenly seized with a cholic so violent, that it obliged her to leave immediately for her cell; but such was her agony, that she was scarcely able to enter one of the bed-rooms on the ground floor, at a short distance from the refectory, where she remained on her knees by the bed side, until. the pain being somewhat mitigated, she was enabled with difficulty to drag herself to her cell. On reaching it, her agony became so intense, that, throwing herself on the ground, and unable to stir, she called for help. Sister Maria Victoria, who happened to pass at the time, hastened to her relief, and as well as she could helped her to rise, undress, and place herself on that bed, which was to be the cross from which, after a few hours of terrible suffering, she was, as we believe, to

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wing her flight to the bosom of that God, whom she so ardently loved.

When explaining to the nuns, assembled in a state of alarm in her cell, the particulars of her sudden attack, her love of suffering suggested to her to beg of them to recite five times the Glory be to the Father, in honour of the sacred heart of Jesus, saying, that "she attributed to his grace her not having died in the first paroxysm of pain." In her most ardent wish to die, nothing but her desire to resemble still more her Spouse, by a more lingering and painful death, could have induced her to recognise as a favour, some additional hours of acute suffering. Painful indeed were the spasms which she endured all that night. and the following day up to three o'clock in the afternoon, that is for twenty-one hours; and although, as we shall see, they were not so severe towards the end as before, yet truly edifying were the examples of every virtue, with which she closed her angelic life.

The first medicine administered to her, consisted of some drops of laudanum. She took them, declaring, however, that she was unworthy of so much attention. Having succeeded in obtaining, by repeated importunities, that no nun or even lay-sister should sit up with her, always saying that she was not entitled to such regard, it required little less than a command of obedience to induce her to allow a servant girl to remain in her cell to attend her during the night. On Wednesday morning, that is, a few hours before her death, having been ordered to be bled in the

foot, which was a new and tormenting trial to her modesty, she could not bear to have an Infirmarian reproved for not having arranged every thing for the operation, a thing that might easily happen in such cases of general confusion; and with the half expiring voice that remained to her, she begged the zealous reprover to desist, saying that "she had every thing that she wanted, and that it was no consequence if things were not better arranged." The nun, however, could not give over blaming the Infirmarian, but she continued so warmly to plead her excuse, and was so importunate, that she succeeded in obliging her to desist.

All that night her violent spasms did not force from her lips a single word of complaint, and she asked her attendant for nothing but her prayers, and to take care not to make the least noise that might disturb the repose of the Religious. In the morning, her first solicitude was to send the young woman, who had watched by her, to make up for her lost sleep; next, as if she had no other concern than that of the sick, she reminded them to provide a certain herb for the sores of the prioress, and sent to enquire how Sister Mary Teresa had passed the night, and if she wanted anything.

The nuns were astonished, and not without good reason, to see her so anxious about others, at the very moment that, oppressed by mortal agony which was soon to prove fatal, she might well forget others and attend only to herself. But charity, on the contrary, forgets its own

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wants, not the wants of others. In truth, whilst her thoughts were so much occupied about her invalids and her attendant, she sought nothing for herself; and the due attentions paid her by the Religious, appeared to her all superfluous, and she accepted them with confusion. During the whole of that night, which was a most violent and protracted martyrdom, she asked for no comfort or relief; and it required another command to induce her to change her woollen chemise for a linen one. Whilst agonizing under the most excruciating internal pains, whilst convulsive throes shot through her whole frame, and a cold feverish sweat poured copiously from every pore, she never asked even for a change, sought no alleviation or the least comfort, but concentrated altogether in herself, was drinking the bitter chalice of her protracted death, invoking from time to time the most sweet names of Jesus and Marv. Her eves were fixed on a crucifix, that which, according to the custom of the Order, she always wore, and her lips pressed the wounds of her dving Lord. She thus continued on her cross as long as it pleased God, who soon vouchsafed to release her from it.

In the course of the night, the internal inflammation soon passed into mortification, and it was understood from the patient, next morning, that her pains were much mitigated, and that she felt better than on the preceding evening. About three in the afternoon, she said, with great composure, that she found herself sinking, and was at that moment seized with a violent internal convulsion,

that left her half dead without speech or motion. The extraordinary confessor at the time. Father Covari, O. P., was then introduced, and administered to her the extreme unction, the only sacrament that remained for her to receive. having already confessed, and received the holy communion by way of viaticum two days before. After a few moments, with extreme placidity and the calmness of sleep, that pure soul was released from the prison of the body, and winged its flight. as we hope from her angelic life, to the bosom of that Good God, whom during the course of it she had so faithfully loved and served. Looking to the number of years that composed it, her life was short; but if we consider the virtues, to the practice of which it was devoted, it was full of venerable old age. This fair flower of Mount Carmel the convent lost, but, in the general pious belief, heaven gained, on the seventh of March 1770. at three o'clock in the afternoon, that is, about the same hour on which Jesus Christ expired on the cross.

As to her person, the Creator had clothed her beauteous soul with a body emblematic of her spiritual prerogatives. She was of a just height, well proportioned, with fair hair, bright eyes, and a remarkably handsome countenance. She was of a healthy and most lively temperament, subdued, however, by the influence of a virtuous violence, so as to appear cold and indifferent. Her intellect was quick and clear, her manners affable, her nature sweet, affectionate, and condescending, but remarkably calm, modest, and

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recollected, so that she rendered herself amiable and edifying, and inspired at once both esteem and veneration. She lived twenty-two years, seven months, and nineteen days, and of these, five years and some months were spent in the convent.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OBSERVATIONS MADE ON WHAT OCCURRED IN HER CORPSE, AND WAS BELIEVED PRODIGIOUS.

It is unnecessary to say how deep and severe was the wound, inflicted on the hearts of her sisters in religion by this unexpected blow, how keeply it was felt by her pious father, who, however, had the rare and almost singular consolation of being summoned as a witness to the virtues of his daughter, towards her beatification and canonization, (the mother of S. Aloysius Gonzaga enjoyed the same favour,) for these are reflections that present themselves spontaneously to every mind and heart. We shall rather state the changes which occurred in that virginal body, and which, in the judgment of the physicians and surgeons called in to observe them, were altogether miraculous.

Immediately after her death, the body of Sister Teresa Margaret became quite stiff; the pale and livid colour of death extended itself over her face and neck, and the lower region of the stomach appeared uncommonly swollen. Her death had

been caused by mortification in the intestines: these, according to the exigency of the disease, were sufficiently filled with liquid that still remained, and every thing indicated immediate corruption. The coffin, therefore, was ordered at once, for the purpose of enclosing the body as soon as decomposition was observed to begin, and this was expected almost every moment. As, however, the corpse continued in the same state. they were able to expose it to view at the usual grate of the church, although, in consequence of the swelling having increased still more, to prevent its obstructing the view of the face, the head was raised by means of double cushions, placed beneath the shoulders. In conveying it however to the vault, to which, as usual, it was to be consigned, it was remarked that on the face, hands, and feet, to that livid purple hue, which the body exhibited at first, had succeeded a fairer paleness, varied on the cheeks by a slight tinge of red. The nuns, therefore, thought it right not to inter the body. But on the morning of the ninth of March, being again met at the sepulchre, they were astonished to find that pale colour of the hands and feet changed into real flesh colour, as if she were still alive, and the cheeks so natural and florid, that she appeared more beautiful and high coloured than when she was living and in perfect health.

In consequence of these wonderful changes, the Father Provincial thought it prudent, in accordance with the express wish of the nuns, to suspend the enclosure of the corpse, in which the

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Almighty seemed disposed to manifest some ray of his glory: but on the evening of that day, the ninth of March, the ordinary surgeon of the convent, Mr. Anthony Romiti, having come to bleed some of the nuns, who required it in consequence of the serious alarm caused by the late sad event, was conducted to the vault, and, viewing that blessed corpse with the eye of a professional man, was extremely astonished on observing minutely not only its general beauty, but also the lacrymal ducts humid, red and vermilion, the lips fresh and roseate, which altogether gave her the appearance of being still alive and sweetly sleeping. He came to see her again on the eleventh, and to him and the nuns, her countenance seemed much handsomer than at first; the swelling was considerably diminished and more yielding, as if its volume were lessened, although the quantity of liquid which it contained was still the same. Besides, there was not only no unpleasant smell. such as dead bodies exhale, but, on the contrary, an agreeable fragrance which one knew not exactly to what to compare.

Informed of all these particulars, the pious Archbishop, Monsig. Francis Incontri, whose memory will be in eternal benediction, ordered the body not to be interred without new instructions from him. On the fourteenth, it was again seen, for the third time, by the surgeon Romiti, and again for the fourth time on the sixteenth, and was always found in the same state as on the first and second visits, with this difference, which was more extraordinary, that the swelling was

still more reduced and much softer. This circumstance struck him most forcibly, considering the quantity of liquid introduced into that body during her illness, and which appeared to have gone on miraculously diminishing. At length, on the twenty-second of March, fifteen entire days, or rather the beginning of the sixteenth day after her death, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the archbishop himself went in person to behold the miracle reported to him, of the incorruption of her virginal body. He had with him besides the Canon Pasquali, several priests of his household, the Chancellor Vignoli, three physicians, and the aforesaid surgeon Romiti, who subsequently drew up the juridical report from which this account is faithfully taken.

As the medical men, whom we have mentioned, approached the blessed corpse, they found the face florid, as we said before, but the eyes were somewhat sunken, and a slight indication of mould appeared under the nostrils. The lips too were found a little dark in colour and somewhat dried up, but the whole body was still perfectly dry, and without the least disagreeable or fetid smell.

Filled with tender emotion and wonder, the pious archbishop shed tears of joy at the sight, and, to the greater glory of God, ordered one of the nuns to move the arm of the deceased, which she did at once, raising it even out of the coffin with perfect ease, and returning it to its place. They were now about to enclose it finally, when the archbishop ordered them to remove with a cloth

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the mould which we said appeared under the nostrile, and rub the part on which it appeared with the same cloth; and to the astonishment of all, the cloth as well as the mould itself, not only emitted no offensive smell, but, on the contrary, sent forth a grateful odour, but an odour not to be compared to that of any flower or perfume whatsoever. On smelling it, the devout prelate went anew with tenderness, and characterised it by saving: "It breathes a virginal fragrance." The face was then covered with the same cloth, the coffin was closed, in a leaden tube was inserted a legal inscription, certifying the identity of the hody of Sister Teresa Margaret Redi, of the Heart of Jesus, with a short notice of the observations made regarding it on that day, the twenty-second of March, 1770: the coffin was then enclosed in a larger one; and both were walled up in the niche prepared for their reception.

The reader will be gratified by a perusal of the deposition of the celebrated physician, Dr. Lawrence Presciani, comprising as it does in a few but sententious words, all that claims particular attention with regard to this fact. I transcribe it faithfully from the Life by Monsig. Albergotti.

"After having weighed and examined," says he, "all the circumstances of the inflammatory attack, which terminated in mortification, an excellent condition for putrefaction; of the habit of body of the deceased, which was full of humours, of delicate texture, and of tender age; of the place in which the body was deposited, a subterranean vault exposed to the vicissitudes of

the atmosphere and not at all sheltered, and at that season moist and warm; finally, of the state of the body, with the bowels probably gangrened. and also loaded with emollient draughts and infusions of their own nature putrescent and disposing to corruption, and therefore directly opposed to this state of incorruption; when, besides the other circumstances of the changes that took place in her, he considered all this, he comes to the conclusion and decides in his deposition, that this incorruption is portentous and prodigious, declaring that he agrees with the very learned Paul Zacchia, that, 'True incorruptibility is to be numbered amongst miracles of great consideration, and is one that certainly requires the power of God.' "*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOME OF THE MANY FACTS DEEMED CONFIRMATORY
OF THE SANCTITY OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET,
AND OTHERS ATTRIBUTED TO HER INTERCES-

The servant of God could be but little, if at all, known to the world: the thing speaks for itself; yet to the surprise of the nuns, her funeral function was attended by a large concourse of the people, and also by persons of respectability and rank. Already, by some means or other, a gene-

* Quæst. Medic. Legal. Lib. 4. Tit. 1. p. 10. § 30. g.

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ral report had spread of the extraordinary piety of this young religious; but when the prodigy of her incorruption, which for fifteen days became constantly more wonderful, began to become generally known, it is incredible what crowds of persons of every rank, as we learn from Monsig. Albergotti, inundated the cloister and convent parlour, to inquire about her life and virtues; and to obtain some part of her clothes, or anything she had made use of, in order to preserve it through devotion, and take it to the sick.

The flowers, which, according to our custom, had been scattered on her blessed body, were the first things in which it pleased God to glorify his servant. Joachim Giacchi, carpenter to the convent, having entered with the mason to enclose her coffin, took unobserved a violet from those that lay strewn on the habit of the servant of God; crossed with it his face, disfigured by disease; and was cured on the spot.

Matthias Nanuucci, a labouring man of the convent, applied another of the flowers, in the evening, to his son's arm, which was wounded by a prickly thorn, and the following morning, on removing the bandage, he found the inflammation gone, the wound healed, an opening at the elbow, from which matter previously issued, closed, his arm, in a word, perfectly healed.

But besides these and other wonders of the same sort, the circumstance of the sweet odour emitted not only from her corpse, as has been said, but also from the things used by her, is particularly worthy of notice. The convent girl, Virginia Martelli, in washing the articles used during the illness of the servant of God, was surprised, on three different occasions, at the very sweet scent that issued from them in handling them.

This odour, emitted by the things that had belonged to her, was perceived not only in, but also out of, the convent; in Florence, and particularly in Arezzo. From a lock of her hair, left at home before she was placed for her education at S. Apollonia's, there issued, on opening the little packet in which it was folded, a delicate, fragrant, and uncommon scent, that perfumed the whole room, to the astonishment of all that perceived it. The same odour was found by her happy parents, and by all who were in their house, on opening a packet sent them by the nuns, containing a piece of the tunic worn by her when living. But still more fragrant, as many respectable persons testify, was the odour that emanated from the brass crucifix, which the servant of God held in her hand as she expired.

The ardour of the people to get, as they said, the relics of the servant of God, did not, as usually happens, cease after a few days, but continued and still continues, not only in the city of Florence, but out of it and throughout Europe, and even in the Levant, as we know with certainty from the missionaries of those parts, as we read in Monsig. Albergotti's Life, which we have always before us, to draw from it this faithful compendium. Nor is this at all extraordinary. In the report of all the circumstances that could

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serve to give a just idea of the servant of God. which at the request of the Sovereign Pontiff. Clement XIV., Monsig. Mancinforte, then Nuncio at Florence, ordered Father Ildefonsus to draw up, this worthy religious, in a document to be submitted to the Roman Pontiff, and to be presented to him in the name of his Nuncio, residing on the spot, was able to state that, up to that time, that is to say, three or four years after her death, there was already on record, amongst the most extraordinary favours, "sixty, and these in part prodigious, granted by God through the intercession of Sister Teresa Margaret, mentioning also the witnesses, and the authentic relations that existed in proof of the same." This Sovereign Pontiff conceived a tender devotion towards the servant of God, whose picture he accepted, when presented to him by the same Prelate, together with the report just mentioned, and another printed report of the prodigious cure of a nun of the family of Bartolomei, which we shall soon mention. It is well known that, whenever the General of the Discalced Carmelites afterwards waited on his Holiness, he always spoke to him of Sister Teresa Margaret, and of what he had read of her, with the tenderest sentiments of devotion, and expressed to him his wish to see expedited, and introduced in the Sacred Congregation, the business of her Beatification.

After this it is unnecessary to observe, that the numerous votive offerings of wax, and other things, brought to the convent by those who seek her intercession, or thank her for its results, confirm the opinion entertained of her sanctity. I shall also omit a catalogue of other names, however respectable, of those who evinced, and still evince, a tender devotion towards the servant of God, and an anxious wish for her exaltation. The singular piety, however, of Monsig, Ginovi, late Bishop of Fiesole, who went in person to the convent church, to ask the intercession of Sister Teresa Margaret, deserves special mention : as does also that of Monsig. Incontri, Archbishop of Florence, who, with so many signs of tender devotion, was filled with admiration at her incorruntion, and wrote the eulogistic record, attached to the inner coffin that enclosed her virginal body. Of others, we shall make mention at the end of the volume. Behold, then, with what glory the fame of the sanctity of Sister Teresa Margaret began to resound in the Church, a fame that flourishes every day with increased vigour.

But to return to the favours, which, as we piously believe, God has been pleased to grant through the intercession of our servant of God, to his glory and the increase of the fame of her sanctity, we shall here mention, with our accustomed by some of the most solemn and best proved.

The first case that we shall mention, is that of Anna Piattoli, who, cruelly tormented with an eruption on her head, on applying to it some of the hair of Teresa Margaret, felt herself at once freed from the constant irritation, which up to that moment she had suffered; and on the follow-

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ing morning found the eruption itself perfectly dried and hard, without any longer giving the least pain; and soon after, when scarcely touched by the surgeon, it fell from her head into his hands, without the patient herself being aware of it. She was a paintress, and had taken the first likeness of Sister Teresa Margaret, which has been engraved in various forms, and distributed to the amount of many thousand copies, to gratify the piety of those who ask for it, and they indeed are many.

Rev. D. Francis Bini, of Monte Vetturino, in the diocese of Pescia, had already received the extreme unction, under an inflammatory attack pronounced mortal: he applied, with faith, a piece of the tunic of Sister Teresa Margaret; and, after a short repose of an hour, he awoke perfectly cured, and free not only from fever, but from so many other pains and ailments, that tormented him a short time before in his dying state.

Gesuald Cini, of Florence, having received the holy Viaticum, when labouring under consumption and other most serious complaints, had recourse to God through the intercession of this his servant, and after a short sleep, in which she thought she saw and was gently touched by her, she, who was dying a moment before of consumption, awoke not only free from illness and restored to health, but so strong and active as to be able instantly to rise from her bed in excellent spirits and full of joy, to the delight of all who beheld her.

Sister Teresa Jacopini, a lay sister in the convent of Saint Martha, near Florence, was for several months troubled with scurvy of the worst description, which, spread all over her breast and left side, caused her excessive pain. After having exhausted all that art could accomplish to effect a cure, without obtaining even the least mitigation of her acute pains, a friar of the Order, who went to the convent for an extraordinary confessor, inspired her with confidence in the intercession of Sister Teresa Margaret; and on being crossed by him with a relic of hers, the pain at once ceased, all her pustules suddenly dried up, and fell off the day following, leaving her perfectly free from illness. This occurred on the tenth of March, 1777.

On the fifteenth of May, in the same year, Bridget Marchionni, also of Florence, wasted by a tedious illness of nine years, which was always aggravated by mortal symptoms, loss of appetite, vomitings, cholic, epileptic fits, paralysis, and finally apoplexy, whilst struggling with death. and dragging out existence from one moment to another as if by a miracle, as the attending physician declares in his report, enters on a devout exercise of prayer to God, through the intercession of Sister Teresa Margaret; continues and completes it; and at its termination, "lo! her paralysis and atrophy gone; motion, feeling, heat, restored to her whole frame; and the invalid liberated from all her ills, vigorous, healthy, robust, with the full and immediate restoration not only of her strength, but also of her flesh, and

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active and ready for everything as if she had never been ill, without experiencing any subsequent crisis or change, without the least remains of the illness that afflicted her."

I subjoin another of more recent date, in 1787. Francis Steffer, also of Florence, was slewly wasting away from a violent attack on his chest. which he had now endured for two months. Such was the state of emaciation to which he was reduced by a violent cough, bloody and putrid expectoration, by slow and continual fever, that he seemed a skeleton. He had known Sister Teresa Margaret from a little girl in her father's house, and recollecting that others found in her intercession the immediate remedy of their ills. he too had hopes of being similarly favoured. Accordingly, he had recourse to God through her intercession, and placed a relic of hers round his neck. At that moment he felt himself reinvigorated; and was satisfied that he was cured. In fact, on the arrival of the physician, he declared that he found him a different man from what he had left him, and in six days only, after such an illness, he was able to leave the house in perfect health, and resume his ordinary occupations.

I have reserved for the last place, two of these events deemed miraculous, because they are more circumstantially detailed, have been already printed, and are fortified by the most authentic testimonies. I begin with that one that has been already solemnly legalized by the Archiepiscopal Chancery of Florence, on the seventeenth of May, 1773, and which occurred in the venerable

convent or conservatory called the Bianchette. in Florence, in the person of one of its mistresses. Bestrice Kajer. She had been more than six years labouring under many and complicated maladies, declared incurable by the profession. They consisted of obstinate pains in the head. stomach, and sides, accompanied with oppression, convulsions, and almost total paralysis. In the beginning of 1773, she not only found herself worse, and more paralysed, but visited by additional maladies equally obstinate; by eruptions. erysipelas, schirrous tumours, vertigo, and finally by fever. Given over by her physicians, she was left in the hands of the clergy. Her confessor presents her with a picture of Sister Teresa Margaret, and exhorts her to recommend herself to God through her intercession, in order to obtain the favour of being restored to health of body, should it be conducive to that of the soul. She begins a Novena to this effect, and on the last day of it finds herself worse in every respect, but firmer in the confidence of obtaining her cure. In fact, in a few hours after the most sensible increase of her pains, she suddenly feels an extraordinary movement in her legs; rises instantly from her bed; drinks at a single draught a glass of water, what she had not done for so long a time; dresses herself; goes down to the church with her companions to thank God: ascends the stairs without difficulty and without help, as she had descended them; remains on her knees for about half an hour, and finds herself entirely free from those maladies that had afflicted her for six years, three months, and eight days.

The other is that obtained by the Rev. Mother, Anne Fedele, of the noble family of Bartolomei. a nun in the convent of Santa Maria di Monticelli, in Florence, in the same year, 1773. This Religious had been confined to her bed for sevenand-twenty months, by a most serious attack of palsy, aggravated by frequent epileptic fits, which, on two occasions, becoming really apoplectic, had deprived her of all feeling and motion in her right side. She found it difficult to speak, and so difficult to swallow, that for seventy-two days she had been unable to take anything but fluids: but in the beginning of 1773, she was given over by the physicians, who pronounced her case desperate. Under these circumstances, she asked for a relic of Sister Teresa Margaret, which she applied to herself with faith. On two successive evenings. while asleep, she seemed to see the servant of God in the company of another nun, and was encouraged by her to hope; but the third evening. being almost perfectly awake, she again saw the servant of God with the same companion, but encompassed with a splendour that illumined the She then recognised more fully entire room. Sister Teresa Margaret, whom she had seen before she became a Teresian nun, and was told by her that her companion was her Mother S. Te-She then saw her approach, and being touched by her in all the infirm parts, she heard

her utter these words: Arise; thou art healed. The vision then disappeared, and the invalid instantly

rose in perfect health.

Let this suffice as a specimen of the favours believed to have been miraculously conferred by the Almighty, through the intercession of this his servant; but, at the same time, let the reader recollect that, in the report required by Clement XIV., of holy memory, they were able to declare, that up to that time there were upwards of sixty of more than ordinary note, the proofs of which are preserved.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PIRST STEPS TOWARDS THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF SISTER TERESA MARGARET.—
FIRST RECOGNITION OF HER BODY, WHICH IS FOUND INCORRUPT.

THE wishes of the Supreme Pontiff, Clement XIV., for the introduction of the cause of the servant of God, were revered by the pious Archbishop, Monsig. Incontri, as most gracious commands in perfect accordance with his own earnest desires. The compilation of the ordinary process of her virtues, he therefore commenced as soon as possible; but multiplicity of business prevented him from completing it before his death, which occurred in 1780. The glory of finishing the undertaking was reserved for his most worthy successor, Monsig. Martini, an Archbishop so well known and so much respected throughout the

Christian world for his works, worthy as they are of the Fathers of the first ages of the Church. and principally for his Italian Version of the Sacred Scriptures, so highly eulogised by Pius VI., and forming an epoch in the history of the Church, as the first translation solemnly recognised by the Roman Poutiff. He it was, who had the kindness to transmit to Rome the entire process, from which the Advocate Costanzi extracted the summary of the cause, under the auspices of his Eminence, Card. Salviati, both now dead, and at the instance of Father Eustachius Mary of S. Raphael, a barefooted Carmelite, and now, for the second time, Superior of the Roman Province. But the vicissitudes of the times suspended the distribution of the copies of that summary amongt the members of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, and they nearly all remained in the hands of a faithless depository, who sold them for a trifle, so that to supply sixty-five printed copies which were wanted, it would have been necessary to incur no inconsiderable expense, had not the pious munificence of the reigning Pontiff. Pius VII., benignantly deigned to supply the deficiency. The others had been recovered by the Advocate Mattioli, who, immediately that he was called on, resigned them with pleasure to the new Postulator. But of this in the next and last chapter.

Thirteen years had now elapsed since the precious death of our servant of God, when the nuns expressed to the archbishop their apprehensions, that her body must have suffered from

water, that passed through a pipe in the wall near the spot where the coffin was deposited, and which was observed to have injured the wall itself. A pious wish to see once more that precious corpse, in which God had manifested his glory, previously to its interment, could not well be resisted. To this, their earnest solicitation, the pious prelate kindly consented, on the 16th of June, 1783; and accordingly summoned. to be present on the occasion, the favoured father of the servant of God, the Cavalier Ignatius Redi. then raised to the jurisdiction of the Bailiwick of Arezzo, accompanied by other distinguished personages, amongst whom were Father Ildefonsus, her spiritual director, and some of the nuns, that is, the prioress and sub-prioress, Sister Maria Victoria, who, by the holy kiss of Teresa Margaret, was freed from spasmodic toothache. and Rev. Mother Piccolomini, the present prioress, who, as she had been her only confident in things corporal and spiritual as her under-mistress when she was a novice, and subsequently, as we have already said, is also at present the most zealous promoter of the cause of her exaltation. All these, together with the officers of the Curia and the necessary medical men, descended into the subterranean sepulchre, and, with the due solemnities, removed thence the body of Sister Teresa Margaret.

As had been anticipated, it was found incorrupt; and we shall just now subjoin the decisive judgment, given on the subject by the celebrated Doctor Lorentino Presciani; but here we pass

over in silence the tender emotion, which must have thrilled through the hearts of the father and director of this blessed creature, for whom it was reserved to behold her, after the lapse of so many years, excepted from the common doom. that consigns our flesh to that dust of which we are all formed, and as beautiful as if she were still living. What too must have been the sentiments, what the language, of the good nuns already mentioned, and of all the others who were afterwards called by the archbishop to recognise in her countenance, preserved to a miracle in its lineaments, the angelic features of their holy sister. At that affecting moment how must not they have wept with tenderness? The reader will pardon these reflections: they are the outpourings of a heart overflowingly full.

That blessed body was then, to the admiration and delight of all, found incorrupt. Surgeon Romiti made an exact report of the circumstance, confirmed by the depositions of the three distinguished physicians who were present on the occasion, and were ocular witnesses of the fact, Doctors Antony Maria Franchi, college physician, Gaetan Pellegrini and Antony Durazzini, physicians to the convent, who declare her preservation in the state in which they found her a prodigy. Here I shall only insert the declaration of the above-mentioned doctor, as recorded in the life by Monsig. Albergotti, of which this volume is a compendium.

"I. Lorentino Presciani, public physician of the city of Arezzo, have read and considered attentively the report made by the Surgeon Antony Romiti, and signed by Doctors Franchi and Durazzini, relative to the condition of the body of Sister Teresa Margaret, of the heart of Jesus. The condition of the said body, which, thirteen vears after her death, not only does not present the least sign of decomposition, but not even the characteristics of desiccation, as the white colour of the flesh and the elasticity of the muscles demonstrate, obliges me to repeat what I before put on record as my judgment in Arezzo, on the 5th of April, 1770, and printed in Florence in the same year, and to re-assert on these stronger grounds now supplied by the lapse of full thirteen years, that such incorruption, in all its circumstances and conditions contrary to the ordinary and known laws of nature, hitherto not falsified by any other perfectly similar and true narrative, is to be considered prodigious."

Signed, Lorentino Presciani.

CHAPTER XXX.

SECOND RECOGNITION AND TRANSLATION OF THE BODY, WHICH IS AGAIN FOUND, AS AT FIRST, INCORRUPT.

THIRTY-FIVE years had now nearly elapsed since the death of the servant of God; but her pious memory was still fresh, and the interest

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felt in her heatification was still undiminished. On the contrary, in these latter years the desire of its accomplishment had assumed such fresh vigour that, having remained in a state of suspense for some years in consequence of the wellknown circumstances of the times, measures were now being adopted for its resumption. At this conjuncture, those who were most active in promoting the glory of God by her exaltation. felt anxious to have the blessed body transferred to some more becoming place, where it might be better preserved. A wish was also felt, for the same reasons as before, to ascertain if Providence had deigned still to preserve it from corruption. in a manner, as we have said, deemed miraculous when visited for the first time in 1783: and lo! how signally God was pleased to second these pious and devout intentions of his servants.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII. was then at Florence, on his return to Rome from France, where he had been on most important concerns of the Church, and to crown the then victorious emperor of the French, Napoleon Buonaparte. On his holiness's first passage through Florence, the Giver of all good gifts had made use of the piety of the grand duchess as the occasion of the instantaneous cure, on the 6th of November, 1803, in the convent of the servant of God, of a nun who, from a state of deplorable illness under a tedious and incurable malady, rose suddenly from her bed, as she still continues to be, in rude and vigorous health. From those whose kindness we have once experienced we are na-

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turally encouraged to solicit new favours, and hence the nuns, bound to enclosure and therefore deprived of the happiness of presenting themselves at the feet of the holy father as they wished, summoned courage to ask the grand duchess to obtain for them the high honour of a visit. The pontiff, who is of the kindliest nature. and most sensible of the many illustrious proofs of filial piety shown him with royal munificence by our august and pious princess, on this, as well as on his first journey, was disposed to second all her wishes, assented at once to her request, and proceeded to the convent. It is not to be dissembled that the Carmelites of S. Teresa may boast some tender claims on his affections, and might therefore have well received this distinction without exciting the jealousy of other orders: his happy mother was a Teresian Nun. On the 8th of May his Holiness, accompanied by the Grand-duchess, went to the convent of S. Teresa. where the nuns had the indescribable consolation of being admitted to kiss his feet, and obtain many spiritual favours for which they supplicated him. The then prioress, Mother Anna Maria Piccolomini, of S. Anthony, so often mentioned in this life of the servant of God, humbly preferred her most earnest prayer to be allowed to have the body raised from the incessantly damp situation of the common cemetery, and transferred to another to be approved by the Archbishop. The Holy Father had the kindness to mention the matter to his Grace, who replied: "Holy Father, I have undergone much labour and I am grown old," as if he would say that, having devoted much time and attention to the completion of the ordinary process, unless soon permitted to see that blessed body, he had no hope of seeing it at a later period. Having perfectly understood what he meant, the pontiff almost cut him short and subjoined: "Do then as you think proper."

In consequence of this kind permission they thought of placing it walled up in the choir, where also reposes the body of the Rev. Mother Maria Agnes Lomellini of Jesus, one of the foundresses, who is held in great veneration; and this idea having met the approbation of the archbishop, who visited the spot in person and found it suitable, and one that involved no undue honour that could prove prejudicial to the cause. they there prepared the recess fitted to receive the coffin of Sister Teresa Margaret. The good nuns, and others devoutly disposed towards the memory of the servant of God, were impatient for the accomplishment of this new recognition and translation: but in consequence of the many occupations of the archbishop, and of the recess prepared for her reception not being sufficiently seasoned, the review of the blessed corpse and its translation were put off until the twenty-first of the following June, the feast of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, on which day of that year, 1805, fell the solemnity of the sacred heart of Jesus. All that we term chance is ordained by Providence. The first ray of more solemn honour that God shed on Sister Teresa Margaret, of the heart of

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Jesus, imitatress and most felicitous copy of S. Aloysius Gonzaga, beamed, as it were, by chance and without previous arrangement, on the Feast of the sacred heart of Jesus, and of S. Aloysius Gonzaga. How truly consoling a coincidence! How auspicious a prognostic!

On the twenty-first of June, 1805, at four o'clock p. m., Monsignor Anthony Martini, archbishop of Florence, entered the convent for this purpose with the bishop of Tesole, the prior of San Lorenzo, now bishop of Colle; the prior of S. Anbrogio, confessor to the king; and D. Bronzoli, confessor to the queen; the vicar, and the physicians, surgeons, chancellor, and every other legal person necessary to the authenticity of the act then to be performed.

Scarcely had they begun to move the masonry in order to dislodge the coffin, when the grand-duchess arrived, and in the most edifying manner descended the vault to be present at the first appearance of the body of the servant of God. The coffin having been extracted, and the identity recognized by inspecting the seals and every thing else necessary to be attended to in similar cases, the body of Sister Teresa Margaret was now exhibited to view.

At first the face appeared covered as it were with a shroud, but it was a layer of thick mould, which, when gently removed with a painting-brush by Surgeon Romiti, exhibited the real features of the servant of God. She was at once recognized by those who had seen her alive, and who had been present at the first interment in

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1770, and at the second recognition in 1783. The remainder of the body also was covered with the same mould in a dried state, which became pulverized without having done the least injury to its integrity. The clothes were found exactly as they had been put on her twelve years before. a circumstance which, considering the damp of the place, which had penetrated to the corpse so as to cover it as we have said with mould, is not unworthy of observation. The chemise particularly, which was of fine linen, had not undergone the least change, and looked as if it had been that moment cut from the piece. It was also observed, that at the lower end of the coffin. from the shoulders to the feet, although there were some stains caused by the mould, there was no sign whatever of damp.

Taken out of the coffin, the body was placed on a table in the chapter-room, covered with a white sheet; and the following are the observations made by the doctors and surgeons, who subsequently drew up a distinct report thereof, signed by themselves and legalized in due form, and to be submitted in due time to those who

are to pronounce upon the cause.

"The entire body was flesh-coloured, dry, but elastic throughout, even in the region of the stomach, a matter that created great surprise. The hair and eyebrows, which were a rich blond colour, were still fresh and bright, and looked as if they belonged to a living body. The mark of the lancet on the right foot, where she had been bled, was observed dry, but well-coloured, and without the least corruption."

These observations having been made, the body was decently dusted over by the nuns with painting brushes, and again dressed in a tunic of fine linen and a habit of the form and colour of the order, but made, it was thought proper, of thread and silk. Being then euclosed in the coffins, which were furnished with the authentic seals, it was placed in the recess prepared for it behind an angle of the choir, and so well constructed that, unless expressly informed, no one could say where the body reposes.

We have thus conducted our narrative up to the year 1806. The process of her beatification is now before the sacred congregation of rites; and we hope all through the grace of him who glorifies his chosen friends. May all who have interested themselves in the work of his glory, one day meet together, where we trust Sister Teresa Margaret is, in the kingdom of our God, to praise and bless him, first in himself, and next in his Saints.

NOTE.

Extract of a Letter, received by the Translator from a Nun of the Convent of S. Teresa in Florence, on the 31st of December, 1837.

"It is now nearly two years since we saw the body of our venerable Sister Teresa Margaret. It was then entire and flexible; the face, hands, and feet were of a light olive colour, and the rest of the body of nearly a natural flesh colour. Her hair is fair and beautiful, and firmly attached, quite like that of a living person. Her eyes are not quite closed; and beneath the lids we saw part of the blue pupils, as natural and beautiful as they were in life. Many and frequent are the miraculous cures, wrought by Almighty God through her intercession," &c.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING A BRIEF NOTICE OF THE MOTHER OF HIS HOLINESS, PIUS VII., OF HAPPY MEMORY.

This illustrious lady, the Countess Joanna Ghini of Cesena, had been married to a member of the noble house of Chiaramonti, whose exalted worth was brought under public notice some years ago in Rome. In embracing the marriage state, she sacrificed her own inclinations to the will of her parents, which was regulated by the sovereign disposition of God, who wished to make her the mother of a son destined to be the father of all Christians. Having been left a widow at the still unadvanced age of forty-two. she led a life so devout that she was allowed to communicate daily. At the same time, she at once began to think of retiring from the world. and entering into religion; but being obliged to attend to the education and establishment of her pious family, she during ten years consoled herself for the privation by writing constantly to the prioress of S. Teresa at Fano, to whom she communicated the state of her interior with regard to her vocation, and from whom she received proper directions and instructions. There was still living in 1806 a nun, whom the prioress employed as her secretary in that correspondence, and to whom we are indebted for these particu-After the profession of her son, Gregory

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Barnabas Chiaramonti, as a Benedictine, a ferwards Visible Head of the Church as Pius VII., she placed her daughter, for her education, in a convent at Rimini; and without acquainting the rest of the family, went to the abovementioned convent of S. Teresa at Fano, where, after a few months' probation, she received the religious habit on the tenth of April, 1761, and took the name of Sister Teresa Diletta of Jesus and Marv.

She lived as a nun for twelve years, during which she was a source of great edification to the entire community. All were astonished, and not without reason, to see a matron advanced in years, and accustomed to command, and he obeyed and served, as perfect in the minutest obedience as the youngest girl could be. She was remarkable for her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and her humility, which shone forth so conspicuously in her, inasmuch as, notwith-standing her study to observe silence, and decline every situation that she knew to be one of some pre-eminence, she appeared endowed with extraordinary prudence in the management, not only of temporal, but also of spiritual affairs. She departed this life on the twenty-second of November, 1773, after a long and painful dropsical complaint, endured with the most religious resignation. Besides the edifying memory of her good example, she left to the convent distinguished monuments of her pious liberality, particularly in having enriched its church with many precious ornaments.

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But all this is little, or rather nothing, when compared to the glory that results to that convent, and is shed over the whole order of our Lady of Mount Carmel, of having had within its walls, and clothed in its habit, almost another Sylvia, the mother of a pope, called in the Benedictine Order Gregory, after the first of that name, Gregory the Great.

The pious and august sovereign, Pius VII., passing by Fano in his way to Rome from Venice, where he had been lately exalted to the dignity of Vicar of Jesus Christ, made it a sacred duty to visit the tomb of his deceased mother. and deck it with the flowers of filial piety and the offerings of filial devotion. On the twentieth of June, 1800, he celebrated mass in the convent choir, in which repose her mortal remains; after which he gave the solemn absolution, according to the sacred rite. This act of the supreme pontiff, in itself extremely tender and affecting, was rendered still more so by the demonstrations of deep emotion, which the Holy Father was unable to conceal during its performance, and by his having been accompanied on the occasion by his two brothers, his two sisters, a widowed sisterin law, and her two daughters, - all of whom were unable to repress the tears of tenderness. that rolled down their cheeks, and with good reason, at the obsequies which a son, a Pope, their relation, was performing over the remains of their common mother.

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